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Consolation, or Comfort for the afflicted

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Consolatio

OR

Comfort for the Afflicted

EDITED BY THE
REV. C. E. KENNAWAY

WITH A PREFACE BY
SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

THE history of this book will best explain its purpose, and the use to which it should be put.

It is the fruit of the long and patient acquaintance of a renewed soul with the precious discipline of weakness and pain. The trials of such a state, and the blessings to be gained from it, may be traced in these pages: they contain, in brief, a library for the sick and the sad-hearted.

The extracts here brought together are passages which, in such hours of trial, have come with thoughts of strength and refreshment to one true sufferer.¹ They are gathered from every source which lay open to her; not from those writers only whose general tone of doctrine would agree with the whole tone of this work, but from all to whom it had been given to speak a word in season

¹ See note, p. 195.

to one who was bearing the burden of the Lord. Thus they are *not intended to direct the reader to the other writings of all the authors here quoted*, but to be complete in themselves,—to serve as key-notes for thought and meditation, in those intervals of stillness and silence, which form so large a portion of life in the sick chamber.

To say thus much, makes it necessary to say something more concerning *her* whose patient hand traced, first, for her own use, and eventually for that of other sufferers, the following pages. Yet to say much would be utterly at variance with her whole life and character, which shrank instinctively from all display, and expanded only in the sheltered retirement of domestic intercourse. “Her heart,” says one well able to judge, “was a well-tuned instrument of most delicate touch, responding to every high and holy thought or desire. There was a dignity, and a purity, and a devotedness, and a heavenliness in all her ways, from her very childhood—her sweet childhood—which seemed to mark her out as one called to be a special witness for the Holy One against all kinds of pollution.” How faithfully she bore this witness, they best know whom her bright presence gladdened most constantly.

Through that hour of great darkness, which in some degree overshadows all, when first the con-

science apprehends the presence of a personal God, she passed early into the clear calm light of glad and holy service. God had given her a spirit in which were habitually blended the most simple tenderness and the purest gaiety: she was the delight of all around her,—her husband, her family, her friends. “I shall never forget,” says the friend whose words are quoted above, “the way in which she last took leave of me. Pure, earnest, loveable spirit, in a most fitting tabernacle! She was such stuff as friends are made of; she was the stuff undiluted; a thousand friends could have been made out of that stuff that was in her.”

But she was thought worthy of a better portion than the best this world can give, and was early cast into the refining fires.

Her health, which had never been strong, failed wholly in 1836; and from that time till her release, in 1843, her life was one scarcely intermitted sickness. All forms of this sharp but loving discipline were sent to her in turn. Weakness, weariness, exhaustion, pain, the ebbing of a scarcely-perceptible decay, and the sore struggles of hardly-retiring life,—all in turn tried her faith, and, through God’s abounding grace, perfected her patience. To these must be added the privations which belong to such a state of health, and which none could feel

more acutely. The glad spirit which God had given her, delighted to pour forth its chastened gaiety in the sunshine hours of family and friendly intercourse. Few ever loved the beauties of nature with so pure and ardent an affection, or rejoiced more in free and open converse with the works of God in earth, and air, and sky, and, beyond all, perhaps, in "the great and wide sea." Yet from these, for lengthened periods, she was altogether withdrawn; and with them from that assembling of the saints in prayer and praise, which was dearer to her by far than every glorious sight or sound in nature.

The last left to her of these external things was the sea-shore; and often did she speak of God's great goodness in so long continuing to her this enjoyment. But the time came when this also was withheld: when the sick-room and the sick-bed, with their weariness and their pain, were, as far as outward things could reach, her only and unrelieved portion: when days of languor, succeeding restless nights, found and left her on the same couch of stillness and suffering.

Such is not unfrequently the appointed course of those whom God is pleased specially to honour. From them are held back those outward gifts, by which others were gladdened and sustained, that they may enter more fully here into the secret of

His presence. What a heavenly brightness gathers round the brows of such well-trained sufferers ! men look on them when they come down from their tarrying in the mount, and mark with awe how their “faces shine.” True, they wear over them the veil of present anguish ; they are weaker and more marred than any ; they are “partakers of the sufferings of Christ :” but it is that the power of Christ may rest upon them ; that they may know Him as others know Him not ; that by His mighty grace, self and the lower nature may be almost consumed : that, by bearing the temptations of weakness and weariness, without yielding to repining, selfishness, or impatience, they may be drawn out of themselves and nigh unto Him, and made indeed chosen vessels full of His power and glory.

Nor do their solitary trials edify themselves alone. In a thousand ways they become blessings to the Church around them. What “intercessions and giving of thanks” are theirs ! to how many an open and observed labourer in Christ’s vineyard may the secret sighs and wrestlings of such lonely chambers minister their strength and might ! What an example do they set of patience, of meekness, of the heavenly mind, of submission to the will of God ! what living witnesses are they of His almighty power and certain faithfulness ! how does one and

another see beside such sufferers the "fourth form like unto the Son of God," whose near presence makes their furnace flame "like unto a pleasant whistling wind!" how often is it granted to them to minister with words of peace and counsels of wisdom to those around them who are yet in the open conflict!

Such eminently was she whom God has lately taken: fervent were her prayers; child-like her submission; great her patience; full of wisdom were her lips.

Through all her sufferings her faith and patience endured unshaken and unwearied, even till her peaceful and blessed end. To her reconciled Father in Christ Jesus she had trusted all her hopes, and by Him she was kept in perfect peace, until He had completed His work within her, and made her meet for that nearer presence after which her loving spirit thirsted ardently. "What a wonderful world," she says in one of her last letters, "this is! but He will set all things right at last! Oh, that He would come! Oh, how I long sometimes to hear His voice!—that voice! and to see His face!

. . . to hear Him say, 'Thou art mine; I have loved thee with an everlasting love!' to fall at His feet and worship Him, in the still and satisfied hush and rapture of love's deep adoration, when the

heart knows it has possession of perfect blessedness !”

And so she passed from us into the rest of Paradise, and the waiting for the crown.

May this little book be her memorial, and lead to the wider fulfilment of her own words, when, speaking to a friend of the one ground of all her hopes, she said—“It is through the merits of my dear Saviour, ‘by His agony and bloody sweat !’ Perhaps sometimes you will think of me when you are saying those beautiful words in the Litany at church.”

S. W.

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CONSOLATIO

I

HE is not worthy to pass for thy child that receives not thy stripes with reverent meekness : tears may be here allowed ; but a reluctant frown were no better than a rebellion.

Let infidels, then, and ignorants, who think they suffer by chance, repine at their adversities and be dejected with their afflictions : for me, who know that I have a Father in heaven full of mercy and compassion, whose providence hath measured out to a scruple the due proportions of my sorrows, counting my sighs, and reserving the tears which He wrings from me in His bottle ; why do I not patiently lie down and put my mouth in the dust, meekly submitting to His holy pleasure, and blessing the hand from which I smart ?

BISHOP HALL.

II

MATTHEW XIV.

Jesus is now on the mount ; the disciples on the sea : yet, while He was in the mount praying and

lifting up His eyes to His Father, He fails not to cast them about upon His disciples tossed on the waves. Those all-seeing eyes admit of no limits. At once He sees the highest heavens and the midst of the sea ; the glory of His Father, and the misery of His disciples. Whatever prospects present themselves to His view, the distress of His followers is ever most noted. How much more dost Thou now, O Saviour ! from the height of Thy glorious advancement, behold us Thy wretched servants, tossed on the unquiet sea of this world, and beaten with the troublesome and threatening billows of affliction !

Thou foresawest their toil and danger, ere Thou dismissedst them ; and purposely sendedst them away, that they might be tossed. Thou that couldst prevent our sufferings by Thy power, wilt permit them in Thy wisdom, that Thou mayest glorify Thy mercy in our deliverance, and confirm our faith by the issue of our distresses. How do all things now seem to conspire to the vexing of Thy poor disciples ! The night was sullen and dark ; their Master was absent ; the sea was boisterous ; the winds were high and contrary. Had their Master been with them, howsoever the elements had raged, they had been secure ; had their Master been away, yet if the sea had been quiet, or the winds fair, the passage might have been endured : now both season, and sea, and wind, and their Master's desertion, had agreed to render them perfectly miserable. Sometimes the providence of

God hath thought good so to order it, that to His best servants there appeareth no glimpse of comforts ; but so absolute vexation, as if heaven and earth had plotted their full affliction. Yea, O Saviour ! what a dead night, what a fearful tempest, what an astonishing dereliction was that, wherein Thou Thyself criedst out in the bitterness of Thine anguished soul, " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " ¹ Yet, in all these extremities of misery, our gracious God intends nothing but His greater glory and ours ; the triumph of our faith, the crown of our victory.

All that longsome and tempestuous night must the disciples wear out in danger and horror, as given over to the winds and waves ; but in the fourth watch of the night, when they were wearied out with toils and fears, comes deliverance. At their entrance into the ship, at the rising of the tempest, at the shutting-in of the evening, there was no news of Christ ; but when they have been all the night long beaten, not so much with storms and waves, as with their own thoughts ; now in the fourth watch (which was near to the morning) Jesus came unto them, and purposely not till then ; that He might exercise their patience ; that He might inure them to wait upon Divine Providence in cases of extremity ; that their devotions might be more whetted by delay ; that they might give gladder welcome to their deliverance. O God ! thus Thou thinkest fit to do still. We are by turns in our sea ;

¹ Matt. xxvii. 46.

the winds bluster, the billows swell, the night and Thy absence heighten our discomfort, Thy time and ours is set: as yet it is but midnight with us; can we but hold out patiently until the fourth watch, Thou wilt surely come and rescue us. Oh! let us not faint under our sorrows, but wear out our three watches of tribulation with undaunted patience and holy resolution!

BISHOP HALL.

III

(1.) Remember that God hath bound this sickness upon thee by the condition of nature; for every flower must wither and droop: it is also bound upon thee by special providence, and with a design to try thee, and with purposes to reward and to crown thee. These cords thou canst not break; and therefore lie thou down gently, and suffer the hand of God to do what He please, that at least thou mayest swallow an advantage, which the care and severe mercies of God force down thy throat.

Prevent the violence and trouble of thy spirit by an act of thanksgiving; for which in the worst of sicknesses thou canst not want cause, especially if thou rememberest that this pain is not an eternal pain.

Propound to your eyes and heart the example of the holy Jesus upon the cross. He endured more for thee than thou canst either for thyself or Him; and remember, that if we be put to suffer, and do suffer in a good cause, or in a good manner, so

that in any sense your sufferings be comformable to His sufferings, or can be capable of being united to His, we shall reign together with Him. The high way of the cross, which the King of sufferings hath trodden before us, is the way to ease, to a kingdom, and to felicity.

It may be, that this may be the last instance and the last opportunity that ever God will give thee to exercise any virtue, to do Him any service, or thyself any advantage. Be careful that thou lovest not this ; for to eternal ages this never shall return again.

(2.) Sickness is the opportunity and the proper scene of exercising some virtues. It is that agony in which men are tried for a crown. And if we remember what glorious things are spoken of the grace of faith,—that it is the life of just men, the restitution of the dead in trespasses and sins, the justification of a sinner, the support of the weak, the confidence of the strong, the magazine of promises, and the title to very glorious rewards ; we may easily imagine, that it must have in it a work and a difficulty, in some proportion answerable to so great effects. If you will try the excellency, and feel the work of faith, place the man in a persecution ; let him ride in a storm ; let his bones be broken with sorrow, and his eyelids loosened with sickness ; let his bread be dipped in tears, and all the daughters of music be brought low ; let God commence a quarrel against him, and be bitter in

the accents of His anger or His discipline ; then God tries your faith. Can you then trust His goodness, and believe Him to be a Father, when you groan under His rod ? Can you rely upon all the strange propositions of Scripture, and be content to perish if they be not true ? Can you receive comfort in the discourses of death and heaven, of immortality and the resurrection, of the death of Christ and conforming to His sufferings ? Truth is, there are but two great periods in which faith demonstrates itself to be a powerful and mighty grace : and they are, persecution and the approaches of death, for the passive part ; and a temptation, for the active. In the days of pleasure and the night of pain faith is to fight her *agonisticon*, to contend for mastery ; and faith overcomes all alluring and fond temptations to sin ; and faith overcomes all our weaknesses and faintings in our troubles. By the faith of the promises, we learn to despise the world, choosing those objects which faith discovers ; and, by expectation of the same promises, we are comforted in all our sorrows, and enabled to look through and see beyond the cloud ; but the vigour of it is pressed and called forth, when all our fine discourses come to be reduced to practice. For in our health and clearer days it is easy to talk of putting trust in God ; we readily trust Him for life when we are in health, for provisions when we have fair revenues, and for deliverance when we are newly escaped ; but let us come to sit upon the margin of our grave, and let a tyrant lean hard upon our fortunes,

and dwell upon our wrong ; let the storm arise, and the keels toss till the the cordage crack, or that all our hopes bulge under us, and descend into the hollowness of sad misfortunes ; then can you believe, when you neither hear, nor see, nor feel any thing but objections ? This is the proper work of sickness : faith is then brought into the theatre, and so exercised, that if it abides but to the end of the contention, we may see the work of faith, which God will hugely crown. God hath crowned the memory of Job with a wreath of glory, because he sat upon his dunghill wisely and temperately ; and his potsherd and his groans, mingled with praises and justifications of God, pleased Him like an anthem sung by angels in the morning of the resurrection. God could not choose but be pleased with the delicious accents of martyrs, when in their tortures they cried out nothing but “ Holy Jesus,” and “ Blessed be God ;” and they also themselves, who with a hearty resignation to the Divine pleasure, can delight in God’s severe dispensations, will have the transportations of Cherubim when they enter into the joy of God. If God be delicious to His servants when He smites them, He will be nothing but ravishments and ecstasies to their spirits, when He refreshes them with the overflowings of joy in the day of recompenses. No man is more miserable than he that hath no adversity. Fathers, because they design to have their children wise and valiant, apt for counsel or for arms, send them to severe governments, and tie

them to study, to hard labour, and afflictive contingencies. They rejoice when the bold boy strikes a lion with his hunting-spear, and shrinks not when the beast comes to affright his early courage. And the man that designs his son for noble employments, to honours and to triumphs, to consular dignities and presidencies of councils, loves to see him pale with study, or panting with labour, hardened with sufferance or eminent by dangers. And so God dresses us for heaven. He loves to see us struggling with a disease, and resisting the devil, and contesting against the weaknesses of nature, and against hope to believe in hope, resigning ourselves to God's will, praying Him to choose for us, and dying in all things but faith and its blessed consequences, *ut ad officium cum periculo simus prompti*; and the danger and the resistance shall endear the office. For so I have known the boisterous north wind pass through the yielding air, which opened its bosom, and appeased its violence, by entertaining it with easy compliance in all the regions of its reception! but when the same breath of heaven hath been checked with the stiffness of a tower, or the united strength of a wood, it grew mighty, and dwelt there, and made the highest branches stoop, and make a smooth path for it on the top of all its glories. So is sickness, and so is the grace of God: when sickness hath made the difficulty, then God's grace hath made a triumph, and by doubling its power hath created new proportions of a reward; and then shows its biggest

glory when it hath the greatest difficulty to master, the greatest weaknesses to support, the most busy temptations to contest with ; for so God loves that His strength should be seen in our weakness and our danger.

BISHOP TAYLOR.

IV

In the cross is life, in the cross is health, in the cross protection from every enemy ; from the cross are derived heavenly meekness, true fortitude, the joys of the Spirit, the conquest of self, the perfection of holiness ! There is no redemption, no foundation for the hope of the Divine life, but in the cross. Take up thy cross, therefore, and follow Jesus in the path that leads to everlasting peace. He hath gone before, bearing that cross upon which He died for thee, that thou mightest follow, patiently bearing thy own cross, and upon that die to thyself for Him ; and if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him : “ if we are partakers of His sufferings, we shall be partakers also of His glory.”

Though thou disposest all thy affairs according to thy own fancy, and conductest them by the dictates of thy own judgment, still thou wilt continually meet with some evil, which thou must necessarily bear, either with or against thy will, and therefore wilt continually find the cross ; thou wilt feel either pain of body, or distress and anguish of spirit. Sometimes thou wilt experience the absence of

1 1 Pet. v. 1.

grace ; sometimes thy neighbour will put thy meekness and patience to the test ; and what is more than this, thou wilt sometimes feel a burden in thyself, which no human help can remove, no earthly comfort lighten ; but bear it thou must, as long as it is the will of God to continue it upon thee. It is the blessed will of God, in permitting no ray of comfort to visit us in the darkness of distress, that we should learn such profound humility and submission, as to resign our whole state, present and future, to His absolute disposal.

No heart can have so true a sense of the sufferings of Christ, as that which has suffered in the same kind. The cross is always ready, and waits for thee in every place. Run where thou wilt, thou canst not avoid it ; for wherever thou runnest, thou takest thyself with thee, and art always sure of finding thyself. Turn which way thou wilt, either to the things above or to the things below, to that which is within, or that which is without thee, thou wilt in all certainty find the cross ; and if thou wouldest enjoy peace, and obtain the unfading crown of glory, it is necessary that in every place and in all events thou shouldest bear it willingly, and in patience possess thy soul.

If thou bearest the cross willingly, it will soon bear thee, and lead thee beyond the reach of suffering, where God shall take away all suffering from thy heart. But if thou bearest it with reluctance, it will be a burden inexpressively painful, which yet thou must still feel ; and by every impatient

effort to throw it from thee, thou wilt only render thyself less and less able to sustain its weight, till at length it crush thee.

Why hopest thou to avoid that from which no human being has been exempt? Who among the saints hath accomplished his pilgrimage in this world without adversity and distress? Even our blessed Lord passed not one hour of His most holy life, without tasting "the bitter cup that was given Him to drink;" and of Himself He saith, that it "behoved Him to suffer, and to rise from the dead, and so to enter into His glory."¹ And why dost thou seek any other path to glory but that in which, bearing the cross, thou art called to follow "the Captain of thy salvation?" The life of Christ was a continual cross, an unbroken chain of sufferings; and desirest thou a perpetuity of repose and joy?

This meek and patient submission under it, is not the effect of any power which is inherent in man, and which he can boast of as his own: but is the pure fruit of the grace of Christ. No; it is not in man to love and bear the cross; to resist the appetites of the body, and bring them under absolute subjection to the Spirit; to shun honours; to receive affronts with meekness; to bear with calm resignation the loss of fortune, health, and friends; and to have no desire after the riches, the honours, and pleasures of the world. If thou dependest upon thy own will and strength to do and to suffer all this, thou wilt find thyself as unable to accomplish

¹ Luke xxiv. 26.

it, as to create another world ; but if thou turnest to the divine power within thee, and trustest only to that as the doer and sufferer of all, the strength of Omnipotence will be imparted to thee, and the world and the flesh shall be put under thy feet : armed with this holy confidence, and defended by the cross of Christ, thou needest not fear the most malignant efforts of thy great adversary the devil.

Dispose thyself, therefore, like a true and faithful servant, to bear with fortitude and resolution the cross of thy blessed Lord, to which He was nailed in testimony of His infinite love of thee. Prepare thy spirit to suffer patiently the innumerable inconveniences and troubles of this miserable life ; for these thou wilt find, though thou runnest to the ends of the earth, or hidest thyself in its deepest caverns : and it is patient suffering alone that can either disarm their power, or heal the wounds they have made. Drink freely and affectionately of thy Lord's bitter cup, if thou desirest to manifest thy friendship for Him, and the part thou hast with Him.

To suffer, therefore, is thy portion ; and to suffer patiently and willingly, is the great testimony of thy love and allegiance to thy Lord.

If any way but bearing the cross and dying to his own will could have redeemed man from that fallen life of self in flesh and blood, which is his alienation from, and enmity to, God ; Christ would have taught it in His word, and established it by His example. But of all universally, that desire to

follow Him, He has required the bearing of the cross; and without exception has said to all, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me."¹

When, therefore, we have read all books, and examined all methods, to find out the path that will lead us back to the blessed state from which we have wandered, this conclusion only will remain, that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God."²

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

V

The greatest blessing which man can receive, is to have his private individual will subordinated to the sentiment of his relation with God. And yet his continual business in this world is to strengthen this individual will, which opposes the entrance of God into his heart. He seeks its gratification in all things, and is ever guarding against anything which may cross it. He thus blindly loves and feeds his disease, and resists all the attempts of Divine love to cure it. This is man's way, and it is a way which leads down to death. God's way is to cross man's way, that he may be turned from it and live. He crosses him in his good opinion of himself, in his confidence in his own strength and in his own wisdom. He crosses him in his favourite schemes of happiness. He sends affliction after

¹ Matt. xvi. 24.

² Acts xiv. 22.

affliction. He pours bitterness into his soul. He sends disease and death into the circle of his friends. He gives him up to the idolatry of the creature, and then tears his idol from him, or makes it a curse to him. He lays him on a bed of sickness, and tries him with pain and restlessness, and brings him to the boundary which separates time from eternity, and makes him look backwards into past time and forwards into the future eternity, and shows him that he was made to dwell with God through eternity, and yet that all his past days have been spent in *unfitting* himself for this state; and He says to him, "How can thy heart endure or thy hands be strong on the day that I plead with thee?"¹ turn unto Me, the only strength of the creature. This is the way of God towards man, of that God whose name is Love: and this is the way that He expresses His love. It is thus that He shakes the bulwarks of independence which guard the entrance of the soul against God. It is thus that He convinces man of his guilt, and weakness, and ignorance, and misery, and persuades him to open the door of his heart to God, and to take shelter under His compassionate omnipotence. Blessed are they who are persuaded; blessed are they in whose hearts God makes a place for Himself, though it is by casting out all other joys.

T. ERSKINE.

¹ Ezek. xxii. 14.

VI

We know that the government of the world is in the hand of God, and therefore we may rest assured, that there is not a single link in the apparently perplexed chain of human things which does not connect with, and guide to, the coming glory ; we may rest assured, not only that all the histories of the kingdoms of this world are under the influence of an unfelt but irresistible control, preparing the way for that kingdom which never can be moved, but also that personal events as well as national, private as well as public, are all under the same mandate, commissioned to lead on to the same great consummation. This truth gives a seriousness and a dignity to everything : it banishes littleness from life, because it connects all with the glory of God and the eradication of evil ; and it seems to conduct us under the shadow of everlasting and omnipotent love, where we may rest in peace until all calamities be overpast.

When the eye of the spirit is thus opened to see God is working in everything, and by everything, to bring on the reign of righteousness ; the heart will feel itself invited to the blessed privilege of entering into the purposes of God, of sympathizing with the everlasting counsels of His grace, of rejoicing in their assured success, and of being a fellow-worker with Him in every action of life. These actions may appear small and insignificant in the world's judgment, but the believer knows that it is

not in vain that the Ruler of the universe has called him to do all things to the glory of God. These are animating thoughts for poor wanderers in the wilderness, who have listened to the Saviour's voice. For them the fall, with all its sin, and misery, and darkness, will soon pass away ; having served, under the control of Him who bringeth good out of evil, to glorify the Divine attributes, and to introduce a high, and holy, and happy order of things ; higher, and holier, and happier, than that which Adam lost, because founded on a nearer relation with God, and a fuller manifestation of His character. The gate of Eden will once again be unbarred, and the banished ones be brought back ; and, in the meantime, though their path lie through the desert, yet that path is the way of holiness, and in it *He* will be with them, *whose* presence can make the wilderness to be glad, and the desert to "rejoice and blossom like the rose."¹ T. ERSKINE.

VII

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."²

This peace keeps the heart in affliction. It is a pledge of the special love of God to the soul ; and as such it begets confidence in Him, so that the soul can stay itself on His promises, and encourage itself in His faithfulness, and look to His

¹ Isa. xxxv. 1

² Phil. iv. 7.

care and power for a happy issue out of all its troubles. It both begets hope and strengthens hope ; and he who is going full of hope to heaven is not easily shaken or depressed. With a crown of life before him, he feels that he can afford to bear the light affliction of the way that leads to it. Besides, it leaves us something to fall back on, when other props, and refuges, and consolations, are withdrawn. Let a worldly man lose his earthly comforts, and he has lost his all ; but let a man of God lose what he may, his main support, his chief treasure is yet safe. Put this peace into his heart, and then place him where you will,—on the bed of sickness, in the house of mourning, by the grave of his best, and dearest, and only friend ; strike him where you may, and how you may, he can bear the blow. He grieves, grieves perhaps more than other men ; for his religion has enlarged his powers of suffering, it has extended his view, it has deepened his feelings and refined his heart ; but he is not moved ; no practical, no abiding impression is made on him. He may weep for an hour, but he will soon take up the language of the destitute Paul, and say, “I have all, and abound ; I am full. None of these things move me ; nay, in all these things I am more than conqueror, through Him that loved me.”¹

BRADLEY.

¹ Rom. viii. 37.

VIII

The comfort that most delights us, is generally the first to perish ; the mercies we lose the soonest are those we love the best. This is not the mere language of sentiment or poetry ; it is the testimony of fact. When have we ever put the creature in God's place, giving it that room in our soul which He ought to occupy, but God has either removed it, or embittered it, or put an end to it? Many of our blessings have we lost by loving them too well. We have slain them by setting too great a value on them, and taking our rest in them. There is not a single earthly good that will bear man's hand when man firmly grasps it. His touch withers and destroys everything. And oh, what a mercy for man that it is so ! It is in this way that a forgotten God recalls our wandering affections to Himself. He lays waste the enthroned creature, that He may once again enthrone Himself : He breaks the cistern, not that we may be left parched and fainting in the wilderness of life, but that we may go and satisfy our thirsting souls once again from the everlasting spring : He crushes the reed, but He substitutes for it a rock : He puts far away from us "lover and friend," with all the unutterable sweetness of their affection, and the tenderness of their love ; but what does He substitute? Himself : the intense, unfathomable love of His own infinite mind, the presence of Christ, and communion with Heaven.

BRADLEY.

IX

It is written, that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God."¹ God has all things in His own hands. He can spare, He can inflict: He often spares, (may He spare us still!) but he often tries us: in one way or another He tries every one. At some time or other of the life of every one, there is pain, and sorrow, and trouble. So it is; and the sonner, perhaps, we can look upon it as a law of our Christian condition, the better. One generation comes, and then another. They issue forth and succeed like leaves in spring, and in all this, law is observable. They are tried, and then they triumph; they are humbled, and then they are exalted; they overcome the world, and then they sit down on Christ's throne. Hence St. Peter, who at first was in such amazement and trouble at his Lord's afflictions, bids us not look on suffering as a strange thing, "as though some strange thing happened unto us, but *rejoice*, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding great joy."² Again, St. Paul says, "We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience."³ And again, "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."⁴ And again, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."⁵ And St. John, "The world

¹ Acts xiv. 22.

² 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.

³ Rom. v. 3, 4.

⁴ Rom. viii. 17.

⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 12.

knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." What is here said of persecution, will apply of course to all trials, and much more to those lesser trials, which are the utmost that Christians have to endure now. Yet I suppose it is a long time before any one of us recognises and understands, that his own state on earth is, in one shape or other, a state of trial and sorrow; and that if he has intervals of external peace, this is all gain, and much more than he has any right to expect. Yet how different must the state of the Church appear to beings who contemplate it as a whole, who have contemplated it for ages, as the angels! We know what experience does for us in this world. Men get to see and understand the course of things, and by what rules it proceeds; and they can foretell what will happen, and they are not surprised at what *does* happen. They take the history of things as a matter of course. They are not startled that things happen in one way, not in another; it is the rule. Night comes after day, summer after winter; cold, frost, and snow, in their season. Certain illnesses have their appointed times, or visit at certain ages. All things go through a process; they have a beginning and an end. Grown men know this, but it is otherwise with children. To them everything that happens is strange and surprising. They by turns feel wonder, admiration, or fear, at anything that happens; they do not know whether it will happen

again or not ; and they know nothing of the regular operation of causes, or the connexion of those effects which result from one and the same. And so, too, as regards the state of our souls under the covenant of mercy ; the heavenly hosts who see what is going on upon earth well understand, even from having seen it before, what is the course of a soul travelling from hell to heaven. They have seen, again and again, in numberless instances, that suffering is the path to peace ; that they that sow in tears shall reap in joy ; and that what was true of Christ, is fulfilled in a measure in His followers. Let us try to accustom ourselves to this view of the subject. The whole Church, all elect souls, each in its turn, is called to this necessary work. Once, it was the turn of others, and now it is *our* turn. Once it was the Apostles' turn. It was St. Paul's turn once. He had all cares on him at once ; covered from head to foot with cares, as Job with sores ; and, as if all this was not enough, he had a thorn in the flesh added, some personal discomfort ever with him. Yet he did his part well ; he was as a strong and bold wrestler in his day, and at the close of it he was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."¹ And after him the excellent of the earth, the white-robed army of martyrs, and the cheerful company of confessors, each in his turn, each in his day, likewise played the man. And so, down to this very time, when faith has well-nigh

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 7.

failed, first one and then another have been called out to exhibit before the Great King. It is as though all of us were allowed to stand round His throne at once, and He called out one, first this man, and then that, to take up the chant by himself, each in his turn having to repeat the melody which his brethren have before gone through; or as if it were some trial of strength or agility, and while the ring of bystanders beheld and applauded, we in succession, one by one, were actors in the pageant. Such is our state; angels are looking on, Christ has gone before. Christ has given us an example that we may follow His steps. He went through far more than we can be called to suffer; our brethren have gone through much more, and they seem to encourage us by their success, and to sympathize in our essay now it is our turn; and all ministering spirits keep silence and look on. Oh! let not your foot slip, or your eye be false, or your ear dull, or your attention flagging! Be not dispirited, be not afraid; keep a good heart; be bold, draw not back; you will be carried through. Whatever troubles come on you, of mind, body, or estate, from within or from without, from chance or from intent, from friends or foes—whatever your troubles be, though you be lonely, O children of a Heavenly Father, be not afraid! quit you like men in your day! and when it is over, Christ will receive you to Himself, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Christ is already in that place of peace which is all in all. He is on the

right hand of God. He is hidden in the brightness of the radiance which issues from the everlasting throne. He is in the very abyss of peace, where there is no voice of tumult or distress, but a deep stillness—stillness, that greatest of all goods which we can fancy, that most perfect of joys, the utter, profound, ineffable tranquillity of the Divine Essence. He has entered into His rest. Oh! how great a good will it be, if, when this troublesome life is over, we in our turn also enter into that same rest! if the time shall one day come when we shall enter into His tabernacle above, and hide ourselves under the shadow of His wings; if we shall be among the number of those blessed dead, who die in the Lord, and rest from their labours! Here we are tossing on the sea, and the wind is contrary. All through the day we are tried and tempted in various ways: we cannot think, speak, or act, but infirmity and sin are at hand. But in the unseen world, where Christ has entered, all is peace. There is the eternal throne, and a rainbow round about it, like unto an emerald: and in the midst of the throne, the Lamb that has been slain, and has redeemed many people by His blood; and round about the throne, four-and-twenty seats for as many elders, all clothed in white raiment, and crowns of gold upon their heads; and four living beings full of eyes before and behind; and seven angels standing before God, and doing His pleasure unto the ends of the earth: and the seraphim above: and withal a great multitude, which no man can number; of all nations, and

kindreds, and people, and tongues, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. They "are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."¹ "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." "There is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain; for the former things have passed away."² Nor any more sin, nor any more guilt; no more remorse, no more punishment, no more penitence, no more trial; no infirmity to depress us, no affection to mislead us, no passion to transport us, no prejudice to blind us; no sloth, no pride, no envy, no strife; but the light of God's countenance, and a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne. That is our *home*; here we are but on pilgrimage, and Christ is calling us home. He calls us to His many mansions which He has prepared; and the Spirit and the Bride call us too, and all things will be ready for us by the time of our coming. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession;"³ seeing that we have "so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight,"⁴ "let us labour to enter into our rest;"⁵ "let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."⁵

NEWMAN.

¹ Rev. vii. 14, 16.

² Rev. xxi. 4.

³ Heb. iv. 14.

⁴ Heb. xii. 1.

⁵ Heb. iv. 11, 16.

X

“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”¹

Methinks this consideration alone should be so effectual to teach us patience, that we should scarce have patience to hear any more! Shall our glory superabound, as our sufferings have abounded? Shall our eternal refreshings be measured out to us by the cup of afflictions we have drunk of? Doth God beat and hammer us, only to make us vessels unto honour? Shall all sorrow and sighing flee away, and everlasting joy be upon our heads? Wherefore, then, thy fretting and fuming, O Christian? Wherefore complain because God taketh a course to make thee too glorious? Doth God do thee an injury to fit thee for a higher place in heaven than thou carest to possess? Thy impatience can free thee from no other weight but *one*, and that is “an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

BISHOP HOPKINS.

XI

1 Pet. iv. 19. “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

Nothing does so establish the mind amidst the

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

rollings and turbulence of present things, as both a look above them and a look beyond them ; above them to the steady and good hand by which they are ruled, and beyond them to the sweet and beautiful end to which by that hand they shall be brought.

If men would have inward peace amidst outward trouble, they must walk by the rule of peace, and keep strictly to it. If you would commit your soul to the keeping of God, know that He is a holy God ; and an unholy soul that walks in any way of wickedness, whether known or secret, is no fit commodity to put into His pure hand to keep.

You that would have safety in God in evil times, beware of evil ways, for in these it cannot be. If you will be safe in Him, you must stay with Him, and in all your ways keep within Him "as your fortress." Now, in the ways of sin you run out from Him.

Study pure and holy walking, if you would have your confidence firm, and have boldness and joy in God. You will find that a little sin will shake your trust, and disturb your peace, more than the greatest sufferings : yea, in those sufferings your assurance and joy in God will grow and abound most if sin be kept out. All the winds which blow about the earth from all points, stir it not ; only that within the bowels of it makes the earth quake. I do not mean that for infirmities a Christian ought to be discouraged. But take heed of walking in any way of sin, for that will unsettle thy confidence.

Innocency and holy walking make the soul of a sound constitution, which the counterblasts of affliction wear not out, nor alter. Sin makes it so sickly and crazy, that it can endure nothing. Therefore, study to keep your consciences pure, and they shall be peaceable, yea, in the worst times commonly most peaceable, and best furnished with spiritual confidence and comfort.

Faith "rolls"¹ the soul over on God, ventures it into His hand, and rests satisfied concerning it, being there. There is no way but this to be quiet within, to be impregnable and immovable in all assaults, and fixed in all changes, believing in His free love. Therefore, be persuaded to resolve on that; not doubting and disputing, Whether shall I believe or not? Shall I think He will suffer me to lay my soul upon Him, to keep so unworthy, so guilty a soul? Were it not presumption? Oh! what sayest thou? Why dost thou thus dishonour Him, and disquiet thyself? If thou hast a purpose to walk in any way of wickedness, indeed thou art not for Him; yea, thou comest not near Him to give Him thy soul. But wouldst thou have it delivered from sin rather than from trouble; yea, rather than from hell? Is that the chief safety thou seekest, to be kept from iniquity, from thine own iniquity, thy beloved sins? Dost thou desire to dwell in Him, and walk with Him? Then, whatsoever be thy guiltiness and unworthiness, come forward, and give Him thy soul to keep. If

¹ "Casting all our care" (1 Pet. v. 7), literally "rolling."

He should seem to refuse it, press it on Him. If He stretch not forth His hand, lay it down at His foot, and leave it there, and resolve not to take it back. Say, Lord, Thou hast made us these souls, Thou callest for them again to be committed to Thee: here is one. It is unworthy, but what soul is not so? It is most unworthy, but therein will the riches of Thy grace appear most in receiving it. And thus leave it with Him, and know He will make thee a good account of it.

There are in the words other two grounds of quietness of spirit in sufferings. It is according to the will of God. The believing soul, subjected and levelled to that will, complying with His good pleasure in all, cannot have a more powerful persuasive than this, that all is ordered by His will. This settled in the heart would settle it much, and make it even in all things; not only to know, but wisely and deeply to consider that it is thus that all is measured in heaven, every drachm of thy troubles weighed by that skilful hand which doth all things by weight, number, and measure.

And then consider Him as thy God and Father, who hath taken special charge of thee and of thy soul; thou hast given it to Him, and He hath received it. And upon this consideration, study to follow His will in all, to have no will but His. This is thy duty and thy wisdom. Nothing is gained by spurning and struggling, but to hurt and vex thyself; but by complying all is gained; sweet peace. It is the very secret, the mystery of solid

peace within, to resign all to His will, to be disposed of at His pleasure, without the least contrary thought. And thus, like two-faced pictures, those sufferings and troubles, and whatsoever else, while beheld on the one side as painful to the flesh, hath an unpleasant visage; yet, go about a little, and look upon it as thy Father's will, and then it is smiling, beautiful, and lovely. This I would recommend to you, not only for temporals, as easier there, but in spiritual things, your comforts and sensible enlargements, to love all that He does. It is the sum of Christianity to have thy will crucified, and the will of the Lord thy only desire. Whether joy or sorrow, sickness or health, life or death, in all, in all, "Thy will be done."

The other ground of quietness is contained in the first word, which looks back on the foregoing discourse, "Wherefore"—what? Seeing that your reproaches and sufferings are not endless, yea, that they are short, they shall end, quickly end, and end in glory, be not troubled about them; overlook them. The eye of faith will do it. A moment gone, and what are they? This is the great cause of our disquietness in present troubles and griefs: we forget their end. We are affected by our condition in this present life, as if it were all, and it is nothing. Oh, how quickly shall all the enjoyments and all the sufferings of this life pass away, and be as if they had not been!

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

XII

Our first object, even in conversion, is to feel rich ; but God's design is to make us feel poor, that we may know how to value our ultimate and eternal inheritance in Him. He might break at once our chains, and set us free ; He might at once exchange the garments of our defilement for the robes of celestial purity. He might in one instant *swallow up death in victory*, and place us with healed heart and diademed brow before the everlasting throne. Perhaps, in some cases, He has done this : for who shall limit the actings of His power ? But this is not the apparent process of His cure, or the mode of His munificence. This rapidity of salvation would destroy the exercise of moral discipline, would draw a veil over many a beautiful manifestation of the Divine character, and would reveal His tenderness, His patience, and His fidelity, rather as inscriptions to be read, than as events to be seen. It is by the slow progress of spiritual character, by the sad resistance of our evil to His good, by the mistakes, and falls, and agonies which we experience, and which He mitigates, and repairs, and counteracts ; it is by bitter self-knowledge, acquired, not by theory and art, but by fact, and shame, and sorrow ; it is by ten thousand proofs of long-suffering, proofs exhibited in the very face and contrast of our rebellion, fretfulness, and haste ; it is by these things that He makes us wise, in order that at last He may make

us happy ; in order that with deep conviction we may know ourselves in Him, and be prepared with accents, otherwise to man unspeakable, to exclaim in higher and holier regions than these, "Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory, and blessing, and honour, and dominion, henceforth and for ever."¹

G. T. NOEL.

XIII

On Jesus may our affections fix ; on Him, the Healer, the Restorer of humanity, may our hearts learn to lean the secret burden of their being ; and this not in words only, in which we are all ready enough to do so, but in very deed and truth.

If earthly trouble is upon us, let us fly to Him ; let us beware of all those who would cheer us without Him ; let us be always sure that the poison of the asp is hidden under their softest and most enticing words. Do they profess to put away from us our heavy thoughts ? Let us beware, lest instead of this, they rob us of the very reality of our lives. False friends, indeed, are all such ; for they would keep us from the only source of true peace ; they would mock our thirsty spirits, as we cross, parched and weary, the burning sands of this desert world, with the lying promise of unreal water. From all such comforters, then, let us turn away. Let us beware of everything, which under any promise would take us out of ourselves, and sepa-

¹ Rev. i. 5, 6.

rate us from God. At such seasons, let us even keep ourselves as free as may be from necessary business; let us strive to hush our spirits into silence, that there may be nothing to intercept that voice which will speak to us if we wait for it; let us fear lest we be led to seek for any other shelter of our spirits short of Him their Lord, that so we may find ourselves to be alone with Him, that He may frame and fashion us, may mould our hearts as He will, may purify, and enlighten, and soften, and strengthen, and deepen them by His presence in the cloud and mystery of sorrow. Let us remember always the love which is smiting us, nor dare to look at our griefs but in the light of His presence, lest looking at them alone we be soured by their sharpness, or become fretful, or dull, or even desperate, and so reprobate. Let us cast ourselves upon the assurance of His love, even though it bear the semblance of the flame-breath of the furnace; and walk humbly with Him, lest we mar or hinder the blessed purpose of His mercy towards us.

S. WILBERFORCE.

XIV

Under the expression, "To me to live is Christ,"¹ St. Paul must evidently have meant, first, that Christ was the source of new life to him; and secondly, that He was the object for which he lived. But this was not all. Christ was also his joy, his hope, his comfort. We think far too little

¹ Phil. i. 27.

of the sources of happiness which are in Him. The Apostle had formerly drawn his earthly satisfactions, and we may say, his heavenly satisfactions, (for he *did* seek heaven after the manner of a proud and diligent Pharisee,) from other sources. Honour, favour, a high place, a famous reputation, the applause of the great, and the society of the learned, these had been the objects for which he lived. To obtain these objects, he had set off from Jerusalem to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ."¹ Who, (he expected to hear it said,) who so zealous as Saul for the traditions of the fathers? who so mighty against the Crucified? Short expectation of sad boast!—He is changed—that very Crucified has changed him! he is a meek disciple of that lowly, lofty Saviour! And now, that despised One is all his joy: he sees Him, bows before Him, adores Him, loves Him, finds all his happiness in His smile, all his consolation in His companionship. He finds now that "to live is Christ," for enjoyment, as well as for exertion. The summer springs of earth's boasted joys, its pomp, its learning, its ambition, its roses of pleasure, its palm of victory, are all faded and dry; the sight of Jesus has destroyed their charms: he "counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord."² Let none think lightly of this branch of the subject; Are the consolations of God small or few? Is the fellowship of the Holy

¹ Acts ix. 1.² Phil. iii. 8.

Ghost unsatisfying? Is the smile of Jesus, the favour of our great High Priest, like the world's love? is it cold and uncertain, like a winter's sun? Nay, rather, we cannot too highly value it! There is no sorrow which it cannot heal, no burden which it cannot well enable us to bear, no loss which it cannot supply. If there be any here bowed down by suffering, any who mourn over a friend, or brother, or husband, or wife, called away by God, and lying in the cold grave,—is Jesus nigh? He can turn your loss to gain. He *has* done so in multitudes of cases. He that can make the desert bloom, can make the churchyard smile. No end to the riches of His grace, or to the consolations of His presence! If a mourner can say, "To me to live is Christ," he has attained the object of his affliction; God's purpose is so far accomplished; he stands on the same ground with the persecuted Apostle; nay, more, he stands with Jesus Himself, and in such presence he must be blessed. It is true that natural tears will flow; Christianity does not seal up the fountains of affection, nay, it rather more widely opens them. But while it expands, it sanctifies them: when the Christian mourns, Jesus mourns with him: and the very thought of so blessed a fellow-mourner is peace. Let us rest therefore on this blessed assurance, that if there be any who is making Christ the object of his life, any who is setting Christ before him in his daily walk, Christ will make that man's happiness and security His daily care. It must be so. He is far better to us than

we are to Him ; and if we seek His glory, we cannot doubt but that He will seek our good.

“To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” We cannot think of anything much more glorious than an Apostle’s life, except it be an Apostle’s death. The life of all true Christians must be a life of much patient endurance, of much and constant suffering. We have all need of patience : life is labour ; and labour with weak hands, and with frail bodies, and corrupted hearts, is always more or less burdensome. We are not like the angels that “excel in strength ;” we have not their speedy feet, or fiery wings, or uncorrupted hearts. We are the painful tenants of polluted clay, weighed down with many cares, and vexed and tried by many temptations. Even St. Paul felt this. He counted up his labours, not as if they were no labour, because he was a converted man ; labour and sorrow were still labour and sorrow, though Christ was his fellow-mourner, and the Holy Ghost his fellow-labourer. He was abundant in sorrow and in toil, “afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labours, watchings, fastings.”¹ “In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”² It is not in human nature, converted or unconverted, to love such trials : it is not in flesh and blood to be enamoured of torture, or weariness, or pain. Hence it follows, that death is great “gain” to all Christ’s faithful followers. It is an escape from

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.

² 2 Cor. xi. 27.

daily burden, daily trouble, daily corruption. "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!" who has not often felt and cried with David? "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."¹ Not that we ought to desire that which God does not give us. We must wait His pleasure; but while we wait His pleasure, we ought to long for the enjoyment of His presence. But then this cannot be except through death; and who wishes for death? It is too true that the number is but small. To leave this world, to change our state of being, to go from the comforts and enjoyments of life, to the dark uncertainties of that state which is entered through death; to have done with time, and to commence an awful eternity; to finish trial and probation, and to stand at Christ's judgment-seat; to be uncovered, bare, naked, stripped to the very heart and conscience of every disguise, and to *seem* exactly what we *are*! No wonder that when such is the character of death, and such its inevitable consequences, so many shrink from it! It is not many that can say with apostolic confidence, "To me to die is gain." But why not? Why should they not thus feel? It is because they cannot say, "To me to live is Christ!" It is because they are not living wholly to Him, that they dare not lay down their weary forms upon the bed of death, as the tired labourer, after a day of toil, sinks gladly on his bed of repose. Nevertheless,

¹ Ps. lv. 6, 8.

death is to the true and faithful Christian immense gain : it is the door that lets us out of all suffering, and lets us into all joy : there are no clouds or care in that glorious world ; there is no sin or sickness there ; there are no bad men, no tempting spirits, no fightings without, or fears within ; no distresses, labours, persecutions ! How bright, how happy does that world appear ! To have God for our ever-present Father ; to hold ineffable communion with Jesus and the Spirit of Love ; to have angels and purified spirits for our companions ; to talk with Abel, and Enoch, and Melchisedec ; with Abraham, and Moses, and Isaiah, and Daniel, and St. John, and St. Paul, and St. Peter : and with the martyrs and confessors of the primitive Church ; to meet again those blessed saints whose eyes we have closed in death, and whose bodies we have laid in the grave ; and all this, in a house built of God, and in an atmosphere of unclouded serenity—may we not, in contemplation of this joy, well exclaim, “To die is gain.” Yes, it is so to the Christian,—to him whose “life is Christ ;” for, however blessed his state now, it shall be ten thousand times more blessed then : if the consolations of God are not small to him now, they shall be immeasurably great then : if he has pleasures now “such as eye hath not seen,” those pleasures shall be inconceivably increased when he receives them into an uncorrupted heart, and enjoys them in a glorified body.

KENNAWAY.

XV

“And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.”¹ What a blessed thing to have memorials before God! How blessed to have something before Him which may put Him in mind of us! We often give keepsakes to our friends, that when they look on them they may remember us. It cheers our hearts in absence and separation to think that this can be. It comforts our sad souls, to think that our friends are reminded of us. How much more should it do so to think that God is *put in mind* of us, that He remembers us! High as He sits above us, throned above the heavens, infinitely great and infinitely glorious, yet such poor worms as we are not forgotten! While He guides the stars in their orbits, and speeds the comets on their shining way, He does not forget one single heart that “hopes in His mercy.” “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.”² Our memorials are all before Him!

In the words cited above we have two things laid down, by which God will remember us. The first is prayer. There is no true prayer thrown away; there is no true prayer forgotten.

It is a wonderful thought how far a prayer can go. Shoot up an arrow into the sky; it will seem to mount very high, but it will soon fall back to the

¹ Acts x. 4.

² Ps. xl. 17.

earth ; its own weight will be sufficient to draw it down. Uncage a lark and let it fly into the air, let it mount and sing till it is almost out of sight ; yet it cannot always rise ; the little warbler will be soon baffled and beaten back by the winds, or it will come to an atmosphere which it cannot breathe, and so will sink down with weary wing to the earth again. The eagle may soar skywards ; it may mount on its strong pinions, and tower far above the snow mountains ; but its daring ascent will soon find its limit, and as certainly as the little lark, it will return back to its nest in the rock. But send up a prayer ! send up a true prayer, and nothing will, nothing can, draw it back again. It will rise above the hills, above the clouds, above the stars, and pierce even to the very throne of God. The man that offered it remains below ; he is smiting on his breast like the poor publican, or in a prison like the chained Apostle ; but his prayer is rising high and rapid on its way ; and neither the stars in their courses, nor the wandering winds, nor the prince of the power of the air, can prevent it from reaching the heaven of its destination. Is this the case of all prayers ? Yes, undoubtedly, of all true prayers.—Not of those which are formal and lifeless ; not of lip prayers, however beautiful ; not of all liturgical prayers, however sublime ; not of all litanies, however solemn ; but of all prayers that are true, and humble, and earnest, and offered up in the name of Jesus, with faith in His most blessed intercession. Pause, then, and consider the value of prayer. You may

sow your corn seed, but worms may destroy it, or moisture may waste and injure it, and all your expectations may be disappointed, but let your seed be prayer, and let heaven be your field; sow there that precious grain, and there shall be no disappointment. God receives it, God guards it, God breathes upon it, and in due time it will return to your bosom again, with increase of thirty, or sixty, or even an hundred-fold.

KENNAWAY.

XVI

Y The Christian's joy with regard to "things present" is this, that he has precisely that allotment which comes proportioned by a Father's wisdom, and accompanied by the blessing of a Father's love: and this to the grateful heart of a true child of God is better, infinitely better, than all the surfeiting abundance of him who could cry, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."¹

The Apostle, however, in the text (1 Cor. iii. 21—23) does not limit the Christian's possession to "life and things present," but he declares that "death and things to come" are yours.

This is indeed a striking peculiarity of the believer's lot.

The man of the world may say, Things past have been mine, things present are mine; but we defy him to add—none but the Christian can add—the

¹ Luke xii. 19. •

triumphant conclusion, "Things to come shall be mine." How blessed a prerogative of every real follower of God. How marked the superiority of the Christian. Are you through Christ a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? and do you ever ask, What will the coming times bring with them? How much of moral, how much of physical evil, how much of spiritual evil, lies brooding, dark, and lowering, beneath their wings? I know not, I cannot know, what will happen; but of this I am assured, with a certainty which nothing can destroy; that He in whom I trust is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; that He can and will control the last acts of His providence, as surely and as mercifully as He has already done the first acts of His grace; and that He, even He, has declared that "things to come" are mine, arranged for my happiness, sanctified to my service, blessed to my present and eternal welfare. Why then should I despond? Why should I even perplex myself? "Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth;"¹ "let the dead bury their dead."² I will rest calmly and securely in the promises, and in the power of my almighty Saviour, for "all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth;"³ and what He has said, He can, and therefore He will, assuredly bring to pass; and overrule the mightiest events which can ever happen in the world, for the benefit even of me, the poorest and most insignificant of His children. Things past

¹ Isa. xlv. 9.² Luke ix. 60.³ Matt. xxviii. 19.

have not injured me, things present do not injure me, things to come cannot injure me; this is the cool and dispassionate conviction of my soul. How unspeakably great are the privileges, how strong therefore should be the confidence of the Christian!

Are any among you, however, disposed to add, It is true, for I believe my Redeemer's promises, things present and things to come, however threatening and disastrous, are, and by the wonderful workings of His providence and grace shall be, my own; but there is yet one enemy I dare not face, there is one hour for which my faithless heart still quakes: that hour is the hour which shall for ever call me hence,—that enemy is death. Be of good courage, brethren; this constant infirmity of our nature has not been forgotten in promised privileges. It might have been sufficient to have included it in the "all things" which are ours; it might have contented our hearts to know and to feel that if "things to come" be ours, death must necessarily be one, and therefore needed no separate enumeration; but, "He who came" expressly "to destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage,"¹ has not failed to speak, even to our very weakness and our fears, upon this deeply interesting point. He tells us distinctly, by the mouth of this holy Apostle, that even "death" is ours; ours not indeed to escape from (that would be a faithless and a coward wish),

¹ Heb. xi. 14, 15.

but ours to meet, ours to oppose, and ours to conquer, in the strength and through the merits of our Redeemer.

Yes, the time must arrive when what has happened to all shall happen to you. "When the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken; when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."¹ What is not the assurance worth, which can stand against that hour? which shall be calm, when all around are agitated; peaceful, when all around are anxious, and enable you to say, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."² "My flesh and my heart faileth;" there is no promise that they shall do otherwise, for they are of the earth, earthy—"My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."³ Thus, through the grace of your conquering Redeemer, death will be yours, its sting drawn out, its terrors quelled, its power for ever broken. And this to the faintest and weakest believer among you, as certainly and unquestionably as to the strongest and most advanced. If you are indeed placed upon a rock, though you stand but a single foot above the highest limit of the waves, you are as secure as he who stands ten thousand feet above your head, and that rock must fall before

¹ Eccles. xii. 5-7.

² 2 Tim. i. 12.

³ Ps. lxiii. 26.

your life be perilled. So is it with the Rock of Ages. Whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, if you are Christ's, for Christ is God's.

H. BLUNT.

1. Cleave to the will of God, and turn with it constantly, as the weathercock does with the wind.

T. ADAM.

XVII

It behoves us to treat suffering, whether in ourselves or others, in a much more solemn way than the generality even of serious Christians are wont to do. In itself it were a punishment for sin, oppressive, hopeless ; through God's mercy in Christ, it is His healing medicine, to burn out our wounds, and purify us for His presence. All are tokens of His presence ; the great Physician of our souls, looking graciously upon our spots and sores, checking our diseases ere they take deep root, or cutting deeply and healthfully into our very souls, if He have compassion upon us, when we have deeply offended Him. All, from the most passing pain of the body, to the most deep-seated anguish of the soul, are messengers from Him : some spread over life to temper our enjoyments, lest we seek our joys here ; some following closely upon what is wrong ; some gradually thickening upon us, if we neglect the first warnings ; some coming suddenly in an instant, to startle people out of their lethargy and careless ways, and show them that the life

which they are wasting is an earnest thing ; some in the natural order of His providence, as the loss of parents and of children ; yet all manifesting, if we will regard it, His Fatherly care, tempering our cup with pain and sorrow, as He sees most needful for us : all, in their degree, loosening our hold of this life ; all leading up thitherward, where there shall be no pain ; all humbling us, as being creatures who require it, and deserve far more ; all teaching us to look into ourselves, to see for what disease in us this medicine has been sent.

All, then—pain, sickness, weariness, distress, languor, agony of mind and body, whether in ourselves or others, is to be treated reverently, seeing in it our Maker's hand passing over us, fashioning, by suffering, the imperfect or decayed substance of our souls. In itself, it were the earnest of hell ; through His mercy in Christ, it is a purifying for heaven. It is the cross changed from the instrument of shame, the torture of malefactors, into the source of life ; it is the cross applied to us, washing away our filth by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.

Every sorrow we meet with is a billow on this world's troublesome sea, which we must cross upon the cross, to bear us nearer to our home : we may not then remain where we were ; we may not, when God's "waves and storms have gone over us," be what we were before ; we may and must bear our parts in the world's duties, (but in proportion to its heaviness, and the loudness of God's warning voice.

in it,) not as we did in its joys; each trouble is meant to relax the world's hold over us, and our hold upon the world; each loss to make us seek our gain in heaven; each bereavement to fix our hearts thither, whither we hope the treasures lent us are removed; each chastisement to deepen our repentance for those sins for which God has so chastened us. Sadder far than the sight of any sorrow is it to see persons, after sorrow, become in all outward show what they were before; even as the impassive waters are troubled for awhile by the stone which severs them, and then become calm and cold as heretofore; sadder far, for it seems like casting aside God's healing hand, and rising up from under it when He is laying low. Rather, it is a Christian's joy, and comfort, and peace, and health, when God has laid him low, there to lie; humble, in proportion as God has humbled him; to lie low at the foot of His cross, trusting that, by the virtue of that cross, He will raise up those who lie willingly where He has placed them. It is well to be there, where God wills; and so, whatever it be, sorrow bringing sin to remembrance, or agony for past sin, or dread of judgment, it is our wisdom not to vent it in excitement, much less to seek to distract it or waste it, but to take it calmly home to our bosoms, and treasure it there, jealously watching lest we lose one drop of its wholesome bitterness; (not anxious to escape sorrow, but anxious only not to lose its fruits. ✓

ANON.

2. In pain, sickness, trouble, methinks I hear

God say, Take this medicine, exactly suited to the case, prepared and weighed by My own hands, and consisting of the choicest drugs which heaven affords.

ANON.

XVIII

“My son, give my thy heart.”¹

Who can fathom the breadth, and length, and depth of this one expression? It seems to say, “All that breathes within that heart is known to me. I know how vulnerable, how ill prepared it is to stand the shocks, and bear the assaults, of such a world as it now lives in. I know the sickening anguish, the deep distress, the killing disappointments it will feel, if it vainly essays to rest its sensibilities upon the creature, or to satisfy its thirst at streams that are rapidly drying up. That heart was made for me, and in me alone it can be happy. I can lodge it where no shaft can reach it. I can ‘keep it safe as the apple of the eye, and hide it under the shadow of my wings.’”² I can still its throbbings, calm its perturbations, and turn its sorrow into joy. Out of me it must wander without peace, for I am the haven where it would be. My son, then, give me thy heart.”

WOODWARD.

XIX

✓ Take up thy portion, then, Christian soul, and weigh it well, and learn to love it. Thou wilt find, if thou art Christ's, in spite of what the world fancies, that after all, even at this day, endurance,

¹ Prov. xxiii. 26.

² Ps. xvii. 8.

in a special sense, *is* the lot of those who offer themselves to be servants to the King of Sorrows. There is an inward world, which none see but those who belong to it: and though the outside robe be many-coloured, like Joseph's coat, inside it is lined with camels' hair, or sackcloth; fitting those who desire to be one with Him who fared hardly in the wilderness, in the mountain and on the sea. There is an inward world into which they enter who come near to Christ, though to men in general they seem the same as before. They hold the same place as before in the world's society; their employments are the same, their ways, their comings in, and their goings out. If they were high in rank, they are still high; if they were in active life, they are still active; if they were wealthy, they still have wealth. They have still great friends, powerful connexions, ample resources, fair name, in the world's eye; but if they have drunk of Christ's cup, and tasted the bread of His table in sincerity, it is not with them as in times past. A change has come over them, unknown indeed to themselves, except in its effects; but they have a portion in destinies which other men have not; and as having destinies, they have conflicts also. They drank what looked like a draught of this world, but it associated them in hopes and fears, trials and purposes, above this world. They came as for a blessing, and they have found a work. They are soldiers in Christ's army; they fight against "things that are seen," and they have "all these things

against them.”¹ To their surprise, as time goes on, they find that their lot is changed. They find that, in one shape or other, adversity happens to them. One blow falls, they are startled; it passes over, it is well; they expect nothing more. Another comes; they wonder. “Why is this?” they ask; they think that the first should be their security against the second; they bear it however, and it passes too. Then a third comes; they also murmur: they have not yet mastered the great doctrine, that endurance is their portion. O simple soul, is it not the law of thy being to endure, since thou camest to Christ? Why camest thou, but to endure? Why didst thou taste His heavenly feast, but that it might work in thee? Why didst thou kneel beneath His hand, but that He might leave on thee the print of His wounds? Why wonder then, that one sorrow does not buy off the rest? Does one drop of rain absorb the second? Does the storm cease because it has begun? Understand thy place in God’s kingdom; and rejoice, not complain, that in thy day thou hast thy lot with prophets and apostles.

Judge not by appearance, but be sure that even when things seem to brighten and smile upon God’s true servants, there is much within to try them, though you see it not. Of old times they wore clothing of hair and sackcloth under rich robes. Men do not observe this custom now-a-days; but be quite sure still that there are as many sharp dis-

¹ Gen. xlii. 36.

tresses underneath the visible garb of things as if they did. Many a secret ailment or scarcely observed infirmity exercises him who has it, better than thorns or knotted cord. Many a silent grief lying like lead *within* the heart, or like cold ice *upon* the heart. Many a sad secret which a man dare not tell, lest he should find no sympathy; many a laden conscience, laden because the owner of it has turned to Christ, and which he would not have felt, had he kept from Him. Many an apprehension for the future, which cannot be spoken; many a bereavement which has robbed the world's gifts of their pleasant savour, and leads the heart but to sigh at the sight of them. No; never while the Church lasts will the words of old Jacob be reversed, "All things here are against us"¹ but God; but if God be for us, who can be really against us? If He is in the midst of us, how shall we be moved? If Christ has died and risen again, what death can come upon us, though we may be made to die daily? What sorrow, pain, humiliation, trial, but must end as His has ended, in a continual resurrection into His new world, and in a nearer and nearer approach unto Him? He pronounced a blessing over His Apostles, and they have scattered it far and wide over the earth unto this day. It runs as follows: "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."² "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have

¹ Gen. xlii. 36.² John xiv. 27.

tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."¹ ✓

NEWMAN.

3. God does not offer me health, long life, plenty of worldly accommodations, respect, distinctions, principalities, universal empire ; but oh, unutterable grace !—Himself.

T. ADAM.

XX

“When Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.”² It is the very nature of compassion or sympathy, as the word implies, to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”³ We know it is so with men ; and God tells us He also is compassionate and full of tender mercy. Yet we do not know well what this means ; for how can God rejoice or grieve ? By the very perfection of His nature, Almighty God cannot show sympathy, at least to the comprehension of beings of such limited minds as ours. He, indeed, is hid from us : but if we were allowed to see Him, how could we discern, in the Eternal and Unchangeable, signs of sympathy ? Words and works of sympathy in another, affect and comfort the sufferer more even than the fruits of it. Now, we cannot see God’s sympathy : and the Son of God, though feeling for us as great compassion as His Father, did not show it for us, while He remained

¹ John xvi. 33.

² John xi. 33.

³ Rom. xii. 15.

in His Father's bosom. But when He took flesh, and appeared on earth, He showed us the Godhead in a new manifestation : He invested Himself with a new set of attributes, those of our flesh ; taking into Him a human soul and body, in order that thoughts, feelings, and affections, might be His, which could respond to ours, and certify to us His tender mercy. When, then, our Saviour weeps from sympathy with Mary's tears, let us not say it is the love of a man overcome by natural feeling ; it is the love of God, the bowels of compassion of the Almighty and Eternal condescending to appear as we are capable of receiving it, in the form of human nature. Jesus wept, therefore, not merely from the deep thoughts of His understanding, but from spontaneous tenderness ; from the gentleness and mercy, the encompassing loving-kindness, and exuberant fostering affection of the Son of God for His own work, the race of man. Their tears touched Him at once as their miseries had brought Him down from heaven. His ear was open to them, and the sound of weeping went at once to His heart.

Let us take to ourselves these comfortable thoughts both in the contemplation of our own death, or upon the death of our friends. Wherever faith in Christ is, there is Christ Himself. He said to Martha, "Believest thou this?"¹ Wherever there is a heart to answer, "Lord, I believe," there Christ is present ; there our Lord vouchsafes to

¹ John xi. 26.

stand, though unseen: whether over the bed of death, or over the grave; whether we ourselves are sinking, or those who are dear to us. Blessed be His name! nothing can rob us of this consolation: we will be as certain, through His grace, that He is standing over us in love, as though we saw Him. We will not, after our experience of Lazarus's history, doubt an instant that He is thoughtful about us. He knows the beginnings of our illness, though He keeps at a distance. He knows when to remain away, and when to draw near. He notes down the advancing of it, and the stages. He tells truly when His friend Lazarus is sick, and when he sleeps. We all have experience of this in the narrative before us; and henceforth, so be it! will never complain at the course of His Providence. Only, we will beg of Him an increase of faith, a more lively perception of the curse under which the world lies, and of our own personal demerits; a more understanding view of the mystery of His cross; a more devout and implicit reliance on the virtue of it, and a more confident persuasion that He will never put upon us more than we can bear,—never afflict His brethren with any woe, except for their own highest benefit. NEWMAN.

XXI

PHIL. IV. 5—7

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but

in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Why does the Apostle counsel thus? His object is to produce moderation. The way to produce it, is to rid ourselves of anxiety. If I am not anxious whether my cup be full, or whether it be empty, I *cannot* be immoderate in my desires. If I am letting my mind lie passive on the sea of God's providential dispensations, then come storm, come calm ; whatever it be, I am at rest, I am tranquil, I am at anchor : my cable is faith, the rock I am tied to is the will of my Father in heaven. There is a blessed peace in this state of holy acquiescence. ✓ It is the anxiety about so many unimportant things ✓ that makes life so troubled. It is the fixing our minds upon this thing, or that thing, and determining with ourselves that they are absolutely indispensable for our happiness, that makes us so unhappy. We jeopardy our peace, directly that we determine any earthly thing to be indispensable for our welfare. It is astonishing how many barks of happiness are wrecked in this way : it is quite amazing how many stately vessels of Christian hope, if not quite wrecked, are stranded, or tossed and beaten about among these quicksands of unrestrained desire. "This thing," says one ; "give me but this thing, or take from me but this sorrow, or lead me but out of this one difficulty, or remove

from me but this rival, and then my soul shall be at peace." Unhappy they who thus imagine! How contrary is all this to the prayer we daily offer, "Thy will be done!" Beloved brethren, strive to think everything a blessing which God sends you,—everything injurious which He denies you. Be not anxious about earthly matters, whether they be great or small; and in the end you will find every earthly thing too small to make you anxious.

Will the thought of the period of the second Advent help the Christian man to moderation? The text tells us that it will. Why, then, and how will it do it? The answer is simple. One great and filling thought will drive out all smaller and more troubling anxieties. The expectation of the Creator will calm and displace those vain expectations, which we are constantly forming, of the creature. If I am looking anxiously for Christ's coming, I cannot look very anxiously for the fulfilment of any earthly hopes. A full cup, or a full purse, or marriage blessings, or a home to rest my body in, or a friend's bosom for my heart to repose on, or grandeur, or pomp, or power, or place—it is impossible that I should inordinately crave any of these things if I am in true earnestness looking for my Lord and Saviour. They are many of them great blessings; flowers of innocent fragrance, planted along the path we tread: but they are not *necessary*; we can do without them. And if the Lord be our hope, if we are waiting for His coming, looking for it, long-

ing for it; if the dawning of it seem to our glad hearts already glimmering over the hills; if the wonderful march of mighty events be like the solemn, but "beautiful feet" of our God upon "the mountains;" if we are thus "looking for and hastening unto" that glorious appearing, how is it possible that worldly cares should make us over-anxious? "Nay, my soul," so reasons such a blessed expectant; "nay, my soul, one thing alone is needful; trouble not thyself about this loss, or that gain; smile not too joyously, weep not too sadly; for smiles, and tears, and loss, and gain, shall all be swallowed up in the glory, and forgotten in the overwhelming presence of thy returning Lord."

But it is not by thoughts like these, however good and great, that anxious care can be altogether overcome. The Apostle gives us a further direction; it is to pray: "In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God."

Now it is the Spirit that teaches us to pray; it is the name of Christ that we plead, and by the power of the Spirit that we are enabled acceptably to do so. But prayer links us to God: it is a chain of glory reaching from earth to heaven; the wants of man pass like electricity up its shining links, and heaven in all its power and consolation descends upon them. This is the reason why the Apostle counsels us to make our requests known unto God; he counsels this as the way to peace, for the telling of our wants and our sorrows to God, is the sure way to obtain consolation and supply. The assur-

ance of this fact is built on the eternal truth of God's faithful character; *we cannot go to God in earnest seeking, without success.* "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find,"¹ is the unalterable law of heaven. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you,"² is the handwriting of an Apostle, and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. We do well to take this blessed counsel, and hide it in our bosom. We should put it away as a cure for heart's trouble, as men put away some valuable recipe for some dangerous disorder. In "everything," remember, not in one thing, not in two, not in great things only, but in every the smallest thing that tries and perplexes you, "let your requests be made known unto God." If a child is hurt, it runs to its mother, and tells her of the injury it has received; if it is in want, it goes to its parents to relieve it; or if in riper youth it is anxious about the future, troubled, thoughtful, perplexed, it goes to its father, and pours all its troubles into his heart. But the things of earth are but the patterns of things in the heavens. Every parent is to his children a type of God to His. This is our encouragement. We are to come with expectation, praying for help; we are to come also with "supplication," *i.e.* with earnest prayer, with clasped hands and bended knees, prostrating ourselves before the mercy throne. We are to come with "thanksgiving" also; we are to remember how much we possess, although there be so much that we want; how

¹ Matt. vii. 7.² 1 Pet. v. 7.

much we are to bless God for, while there are so many burdens which we beg Him to remove. We must remember what an exceeding privilege it is to be allowed, nay, invited to pray; what an unspeakable blessing to be assured that we have in Him, in whose name we pray, a most tender and sympathizing Friend, as well as an almighty and all-prevailing Intercessor. Even in our deepest sorrows we have abundant cause to pray "with thanksgiving."

It may seem to some as if we almost lowered the idea of the majestic God, by making Him so entirely the depository of our wants; but the expression of the text justifies the most unbounded confidence, so *only* our confidence be mingled with reverence. Nay, more, we must remember that it is not we who would draw Deity down to our low wants; He has descended Himself to the last level of our weakness. He is in Christ the God-man. His manhood is the basis of our trust for sympathy; His Godhead is our confidence for power and help. As man, there is no sorrow which we can feel that does not touch Him; as God, there is no cry which we can make for help which He is not Almighty to answer. Whilst in His Almightiness "He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names,"¹ in His meek and tender compassion "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."²

KENNAWAY.

1 Ps. cxlvii. 4.

2 Ps. cxlvii. 3.

XXII

The good which we receive from believing in the love of God, manifested in Christ Jesus, is analagous to that which we receive from believing in the worth and kindness of a human friend, only that the one is as nothing in comparison with the other : it is nothing else than the enjoyment of God in Himself and in His creatures. It is not anything that we get on account of our loving Him ; but it is the happiness of loving Him, and knowing ourselves to be loved by Him ; it is a dwelling on, and in His high perfections : it is giving Him our perfect sympathy, and receiving His : it is knowing Him as the infinite God, and yet as an affectionate Father ; as a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. It is the assurance which the heart draws from His love in giving His Son, and perhaps from some more special and personal tokens of that love, that He will never leave us nor forsake us ; that He will never cease to love us with a love which will be, and must be, our satisfying, and filling, and delighting portion, through all eternity. It is the joyful and confident anticipation of the day when the mystery of God shall be accomplished, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and when the children of God shall be glad, and rejoice for ever in the new heavens and the new earth which their Father shall create. It is the discovering that all the works of creation,—all events, time and space, eternity and infinity, everything is full of that God who loved us,

and gave Himself for us; and who, in giving us Himself, freely gives us all things. T. ERSKINE.

XXIII

✓ The Apostle James says, "Count it all joy when you fall into divers trials, for the trial of your faith *giveth it endurance*;"¹ that is, works the Divine principle into the very substance of the mind. This surely is the great purpose of Providence in the appointment of events with regard to individuals. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without God, and not an event happens without a particular reference to the state and character of the person to whom it happens. We have thus every day of our lives many direct and special messages from God to our souls. They are messages from God, and surely we show Him small respect if we treat His messages as trifling things. They are full of importance; they are opportunities given to us of dying unto self, and living unto God, and holding communion with Him. In every one of them God says to us, "Seek ye my face;" and we ought to be ever ready with our answer, "Thy face, Lord, will we seek."² With what an awakenedness of attention should we live, if we *really* believed that every event is a voice from God, and an opportunity of dying unto self, which cannot be neglected without great guilt, and great loss to our souls. My dear reader, allow me to repeat this to you. Every event that happens to us strengthens either the love of

¹ James i. 2, 3.

² Ps. xxvii. 8.

God or the principle of self within us, because on every event we exercise our judgment or our feelings; and this we must do either according to the will of God, or according to our own will.

Thus we can never stand still for a moment; there is no rest from the conflict; we are continually taking part either with God or against God. There are but two ways in which man can walk towards eternity; the narrow way, which leads to life, and the broad way, which leads to destruction. The first is the way of self-forgetting and God-pleasing; the second is the way of self-pleasing and God-forgetting. He is either resisting self or not. He may be doing nothing decidedly wrong, according to the world's estimate of duty; but unless he is systematically denying himself, and taking up his cross daily, he *cannot be* Christ's disciple; for there is no room for Christ's love in a heart which refuses to give up self. Oh! if we felt as we ought, that that only is good which draws us near to God, and that self is indeed the great bar which divides us from God, and keeps us at a distance from Him, how easily should we be reconciled to those events which cross and thwart the principle of self, seeing that they weaken the bar which separates us from God, our only real good; we should then know that there is no evil but sin, and that everything else must be a blessing, if it is received in the spirit of prayer.

T. ERSKINE.

XXIV.

MATTHEW XV. 28

✓ The lesson taught us by the woman of Canaan has many aspects, of which the first perhaps is this, that by every mark and token which the stricken soul can read, He to whom she sought is the only true portion and rest of every human heart; that He would teach us this by all the discipline of outward things; that the ties of family life are meant thus to train up our weak affections till they be fitted to lay hold on Him; that the eddies and sorrows of life are meant to sweep us from its flowery banks, that in its deep strong currents we may fly to Him; that for this end He opens to us, little by little, the mystery of trouble round us, the mystery of evil within us, that we may fly from others and ourselves to Him.

There is this further lesson also, that He will most surely be found by those who do seek after Him; and this is taught us here, not by a mere general assurance that we shall be heard, but in a way which enters far more practically into those difficulties with which every one who has striven to pray earnestly, finds earnest prayer beset; for here we see why it often happens that really earnest and sincere men seem, for a time at least, to pray in vain; why their "Lord, help me," is not answered by a word. It is not that Christ is not near us; it is not that His ear is heavy; it is not that the ten-

derness of His sympathy is blunted ; it is a part of His plan of faithfulness and wisdom. 'He has a double purpose herein ; He would bless by it both us and all His Church.

How could His Church have been taught always to pray, and not to faint, better than by such a narrative as this ? How many a fainting soul has gathered strength for one more hour of patient supplication, by thinking on this Canaanitish mother, on her seeming rejection, on her blessed success at last !

And for ourselves, too, there is a special mercy in these long-delayed blessings ; for it is only by degrees that the work within us can be perfected ; it is only by steps, small and imperceptible as we are taking them, yet one by one leading us to unknown heights, that we can mount up to the golden gate before us. The ripening of these precious fruits must not be forced. We have many lessons to learn, and we can learn them but one by one ; and much are we taught by these delayed answers to our prayers. By them the treasure of our hearts is cleared from dross, as in the furnace-heat ; our earthly will is purified and bowed ; the passionate fervency of unchastened prayer is deepened into the strong breath of humble supplication ; we "wait upon the Lord who hideth His face ;" the frowardness of our hearts is checked ; patience has her perfect work ; we are kept looking up to Christ : we watch Him by faith, and by His grace, even as we hang upon Him, we grow like unto Him ; His

secret work goes on in us ; we see Him as once we saw Him not, amidst the shadows of this busy life of trifles ; we hear His voice, for we are used to watch for it ; we dwell in Him and He in us.

Nor can we ever pray in vain, if we will but persevere in praying. When we gain not our suit at once, we are ever too ready to desist ; therefore is it that the Lord withholds the answer, that we may learn to persevere in asking ; that we may grow to trust His love, to know what He is to us ; yea, what He is to all who wait upon Him.

He would but teach us to come to Him at once for all, and not to leave Him until we have won our suit. He would but have us know that we may thus deal with Him ; that we want no Intercessor with Him, who is Himself the true and only Intercessor ; that nothing is to be interposed between our souls and Him ; that He is the portion of those souls, and that we may go straight to Him.

Only let us, then, deal thus with Him ; let us open to Him our grief, our sin, our shame, our difficulties ; let us show Him our need ; tell Him where, "at home," hidden from the rude eye of the world, but known to Him, is the "young daughter grievously afflicted : " plead with Him by His covenant of tears ; and, even as we enter with Him into that cloud, on us too shall come forth the sense of a presence which this world knows not ; and a voice shall speak to us which the world cannot hear ; and we shall be alone with Him ; and He shall call us by our name, and we shall be His.

S. WILBERFORCE.

XXV

JOHN XI. II

“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.”

What a sweet title is here, both of death and of Lazarus! Death is a sleep; Lazarus is our friend. Lo, He says not “my friend,” but *ours*; to draw them first into a gracious familiarity and communion of friendship with Himself; for what doth ~~this~~ import but “Ye are my friends, and Lazarus is both my friend and yours;” *our* friend? O meek and merciful Saviour, that disdainest not to stoop so low as that, whilst Thou thoughtest it no robbery to be equal with God, Thou thoughtest it no disparagement to match Thyself with weak and wretched men! Our friend Lazarus! There is a kind of purity in friendship. There may be love where there is the most inequality; but friendship supposes pairs; yet the Son of God says of the sons of men, “Our friend Lazarus.” Oh! what a high and happy condition is this for mortal men to aspire unto, that the God of heaven should not be ashamed to own them for friends. Neither saith He now abruptly, “Lazarus our friend is dead,” but “Lazarus our friend sleepeth.”

O Saviour! none can know the estate of life or death so well as Thou, that art the Lord of both. It is enough that Thou tellest us that death is no other than sleep; that which was wont to pass for the cousin of death is now itself. All this while we

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have mistaken the case of our dissolution : we took it for an enemy, it proves a friend ; there is pleasure in that wherein we supposed horror. Who is afraid, after the weary toils of the day, to take his rest by night? or what is more refreshing to the spent traveller than a sweet sleep? It is our infidelity, our im preparation, that makes death any other than advantage. Even so, Lord, when Thou seest I have toiled enough, let me sleep in peace ; and when Thou seest I have slept enough, awake me as Thou didst Thy Lazarus : “but I go to awake him.”

The absence of our Saviour from the death-bed of Lazarus was not casual, but voluntary ; yea, He is not only willing with it, but glad of it ; “I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.” How contrary may the affections of Christ and ours be, and yet be both good ! The two worthy sisters were much grieved at our Saviour’s absence, as doubting it might savour of some neglect. Christ was glad of it, for the advantage of His disciples’ faith. I cannot blame them that they were thus sorry ; I cannot but bless Him, that He was thus glad. The gain of their faith in so Divine a miracle was more than could be countervailed by their momentary sorrow. God and we are not the like affected by the same events : He laughs where we mourn ; He is angry where we are pleased.

The difference of the affections arises from the difference of the objects which Christ and they apprehend in the same occurrence. Why are the

sisters sorrowful? Because upon Christ's absence Lazarus died. Why was Jesus glad He was not there? For the benefit which He saw would accrue to their faith. There is much variety of prospect in every act, according to the several intentions and issues thereof; yea, even in the very same eyes. The father sees his son combating in a duel for his country: He sees blows and wounds on the one side; he sees renown and victory on the other; he grieves at the wounds, he rejoices at the honour. Thus doth God in all our afflictions: He sees our tears and hears our groans, and pities us; but withal He looks upon our patience, our faith, our crown, and is glad that we are afflicted. O God! why should we not conform our diet unto Thine? When we lie in pain and extremity, we cannot but droop under it; but do we find ourselves increased in true mortification, in patience, in hope, in a constant reliance on Thy mercies? Why are we not more joyed in this, than dejected with the other? Since the least grain of the increase of grace is more worth than can be equalled with whole pounds of bodily vexation.

BISHOP HALL.

XXVI

He who is conscious of no witness but his fellow-men, and who feels that he has no part to act but in the eyes of the world, has lost all cheering motive to right conduct, when cut off by circumstances from human converse. In sleepless nights

and days of languor upon his couch, he has no employment but to count the hours ; no companions but restlessness and pain. All worth living for to him has fled ; his occupation is gone : a burthen to himself, and still left to himself, when "in the night he communes with his own heart, and searches out his spirit ;"¹ what can he find there but the mournful conviction that he is "clean forgotten, as a dead man out of mind ;" that he is "become like a broken vessel?"²

How different is the experience of that man who knows that he is a "fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God !"³ Though cast into the deepest shade of what the world calls solitude, he is never less alone than when alone ; he is cheered by the consciousness that God is "about his path, and about his bed, and spieth out all his ways :"⁴ he has a never-failing and animating motive for the right performance of every, the most trifling action ; for all is done in the presence of that Being "in whose favour is life," and whose smile is the sunshine of the world of spirits. In the chamber of disease, in silence, and in darkness, he has still his duties to perform, his part to act, his battles to fight, and victories to gain ; and all this not only in the sight of God, but in the view of that cloud of witnesses, before whom every candidate for an immortal crown runs his heavenward race. He feels that no silent submission to his cross, no patient

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 6.

³ Eph. ii. 19.

² Ps. xxxi. 12.

⁴ Ps. cxxxix. 3.

endurance of his pain, no tear of penitence, or sigh that breathes towards heaven, is forgotten before God ; nay, he is assured that if God approves, angels and ministering spirits rejoice in witnessing how his "light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."¹

Such is the only solitude which the man of faith and prayer can know ; such are the scenes which open to his view in the loneliness of his closet ; such the stars and constellations which appear when the light of this world is withdrawn, and its sun goes down.

WOODWARD.

XXVII

"Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days corrected us, after their own pleasure ; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."²

There is a reverence due to earthly parents, and children are required to submit to their correction, although herein they often consult their own will and pleasure more than their children's profit. And is not greater reverence due to the Father of our spirits, and shall we not submit to His corrections ? especially since His design in them is to promote

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

² Heb. xii. 9, 10.

the greatest dignity and highest happiness of His children, even to make them partakers of His holiness ; for, to partake is not only to give them a title to, but also to give them possession of, to communicate, to have fellowship with Him, to share with Him His holiness. And the heavenly Husbandman, purposing to make the branches very fruitful, has provided effectual means, among which the chief is His Fatherly correction. This He sends to all His children, and in the tenderest love. He would have them to bring forth much fruit, that herein He may be glorified ; holy fruit, produced by His care and culture, and ripened by daily communication of His grace ; therefore, He appoints many heavy trials and crosses, by which He designs to bring them not only to believe in His love, but also to a growing enjoyment of it. He would communicate to them an increase of its blessings : He would have them nearer to Himself, and more like to Himself ; holy as He is holy—not in degree, but in likeness ; He would teach them more submission to His will, for which He wisely and mercifully suits the cross : He would improve their love to Him, which he does by manifesting His to them ; therefore He sends His cross to deaden their hearts to other love, that He may give them a happier sense of His ; and His children have found suffering times blessed times ; they never had such nearness to their Father ; such holy freedom with Him, and such heavenly refreshments from Him, as under the cross : it only took away what stopped the in-

crease of his happiness, which thereby was made more spiritual and exalted. The cross, thus sanctified, is the greatest blessing on this side heaven, because by it the Father keeps His children in the closest communion that they have with Him upon earth : by it He purges them, makes them fruitful, and partakers of His holiness : by it He crucifies the life of sense, deadens them to the world, mortifies their lusts and passions ; and by it, as the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day. Most blessed renewal ! Daily, the Father communicates (and by means of the cross) new life, new strength, and new comfort to the inward man. By the right spirit renewed within him, he learns the necessity of the daily cross ; he sees the merciful appointment of it, to teach resignation to the Father's holy will,—to work a conformity to the first-born among many brethren, both in suffering and by suffering,—to bring in sensible experience of the Father's support and comfort. What blessings are these ! How great ! how precious ! to be branches in the vine, and to have the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the husbandman, who grafts them into Him. Oh, what an infinite mercy is this ! And to be under His special care, faithfully watched over, in order to remove everything hurtful, and to bestow everything useful, this love passeth understanding. And to have this love to feast upon in the absence of other comforts ; to have them taken away only to make room for this ; to enjoy this most plentifully, even under troubles and afflic-

tions ; and to be only purged by them in order to bring forth much fruit: these are triumphs of Divine love.

ROMAINE.

XXVIII

Nothing so likens us to the example of Christ, as suffering. It seems to be an inevitable law, arising out of the fall of the old, and the perfecting of the new creation ; first, that the second Adam should be "a man of sorrows:" and, next, that we should be conformed to Him in this aspect of His perfection : "It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."¹ And it is not more in relation to sanctity than to sufferings, that St. Paul says that we were predestinated "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;"² and therefore, "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"³ and argues that to be free from chastisement, is an awful exception, rather to be feared than coveted, as clouding the bright though keen tokens of sonship, which are seen in them that suffer. There is a breadth and universality in this reasoning, which seems to force upon us the conviction, that no true member of His body, who was made perfect through sufferings, shall pass out of life without at some time drinking of the cup that He drank of, and being baptized with the baptism

¹ Heb. ii. 10.

² Rom. viii. 29.

³ Heb. xii. 7.

that He was baptized with. And, indeed, if we look into the lives of His saints, we shall see that this is simply true. All that suffer are not therefore saints. Alas! far from it, for many suffer without the fruits of sanctity; but all saints, in some one time, and some way and measure, have entered into the mystery of suffering. And this throws light upon a very perplexing thought in which we sometimes entangle ourselves: I mean the wonderful fact, that oftentimes the same persons are as visibly marked by sorrow as by sanctity. We often see the holiest of Christ's servants afflicted with a depth and multiplication of sufferings beyond other men. They seem never to pass out of the shadow of affliction: no sooner is one gone off than another has come up; "the clouds return after the rain;" sorrow gathers unto sorrow; sickness gives way before sickness; fears are thrust out by fears; anxieties are only lost in anxieties; they seem to be a mark for all the storms and sorrows of adversity; the world esteems them to be "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted:"¹ even religious people are perplexed at their trials. When we see eminently holy persons suddenly bereaved, or suffering sharp bodily anguish, and their trials long drawn out, or multiplied by succession, we often say, "How strange and dark is this dispensation! Who would have thought that one so pure, so patient and resigned, should have been so visited and overwhelmed by strokes? If they had been slack, or lukewarm, or backward,

¹ Isa. liii. 4.

or self-willed, or entangled in worldly affections, we could better reach the meaning of this mysterious trial ; but who more earnest and useful in all good works ; who so advanced in holiness, so nigh to the kingdom of heaven as they ?” And yet all this shows how shallow and blind our faith is ; for we know little even of those we know best ; we readily overrate their character ; at all events, it is far otherwise in the esteem of God than in our judgment : our thoughts are not His thoughts ; we set up a poor, dim, depressed standard of perfection ; and we should miserably defraud even those we love most, if it were in our power to mete out their trials by our measures : we little know what God is doing, and “how can we know the way ?”¹ And we often think the sorrows of the saints are sent for their perfection. Either way we are greatly ignorant. They may need far more purification than we think ; they may be suffering for an end higher than purification,—for some end which includes purification and unknown mysteries besides. We forget that Christ suffered, and why ; and how He learned obedience, and what that obedience was. He was all-pure ; suffering could find no more to cleanse, than sin could find to fasten upon. The Prince of this world “had nothing”² in Him, yet whose sorrow is like unto His sorrow, “wherewith the Lord afflicted” Him “in the day of His fierce anger ?”³—and that, (great as the mystery must ever be,) not only and altogether as a vicarious suffering,

¹ John xiv. 5.² John xiv. 30.³ Lam. i. 12.

but that in the truth of our manhood, He might learn "obedience by the things that He suffered." He was made "perfect"¹ by sufferings, and that perfection, whatsoever it be, has an ineffable depth of meaning. It was not only a sacerdotal perfection, by consecration to the priesthood of Melchisedec, but something of which that was the formal expression and manifestation; a great spiritual reality; a perfection of holiness, knowledge, obedience, will, and sympathy; this was the perfection, in truth and spirit, of "the one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus:"² and this perfection, after the measures of a creature, and the proportions of our mere manhood, are the saints made to partake; they are purified, that they may be perfect: and therefore the sorrows of the holiest minds are the highest approaches to the mind of Christ, and are full of a meaning which is dark to us only from its exceeding brightness. Our weak faith, which can read the earlier teaching of affliction, goes blind when it follows the mystery of sorrow upward to the perfection of Christ.

And therefore, when we look at the sufferings of pure and holy minds, let us rather stand in awe as being called to behold, as it were, a shadow of our Redeemer's sorrows. The holier they are that suffer, the higher is the end for which they are afflicted. It may be they are learning inscrutable things of the same order with those which the Apostle saw in ecstasy. Even with bleeding hearts

¹ Heb. v. 8, 9.

² 1 Tim. ii. 5.

and deep-drawn prayers for their consolation, let us try to believe that God is endowing them with surpassing tokens of love, and with pledges of exceeding glory.

And for ourselves, let us be sure when we suffer that for chastisement and for purification we need more a thousand-fold than all He lays upon us. The heaviest and the sharpest of our sorrows is only just enough to heal us. "He doth not *willingly* afflict."¹ Let us remember, too, that sufferings do not sanctify; they are only seasons of sanctification; their end will be for good or ill, as we bear and as we use them: they are no more than times of invitation to diligent toil, like the softness of the earth after a keen and piercing shower: they hold in check, for a time, our spiritual faults, and prepare our hearts to receive and to retain deeper and sharper impressions of the likeness of our Lord. Let us count them precious, blessed seasons, though dim and overcast; seasons of promise and of springing freshness, tokens of His nearness and purpose to cleanse us for His own. "Blessed are ye that weep now."² He that is greatly tried, if he be learning obedience, is not far from the kingdom of God. Our heavenly Father is perfecting His work in us, laying in the last touches with His wise and gentle hand. He that perfected His own Son through sufferings, has brought many sons to glory by the same rough road, even by the "way that is desert."³ He is bringing you home to Himself.

¹ Lam. iii. 33.

² Luke vi. 21.

³ Isa. xl. 3.

Do not shrink because the path is broken and/
solitary, for the way is short, and the end is blessed.,

MANNING.

XXIX

Let us learn what is the true point of sight from which to look at all the trials of life. We hear people perpetually lamenting, uttering passionate expressions of grief at visitations which they say have come upon them unlooked-for, and stunned them by their suddenness : one has lost his possessions, another his health, another his powers of sight or hearing, another "the desire of his eyes," parents, children, husbands, wives, friends ; each sorrowing for their own, and all alike viewing their affliction from the narrow point of their own isolated being ; they seem to be hostile invasions of their peace, mutilations of the integrity of their lot, untimely disruptions of their fondest ties, and the like. Much as we speak of violent deviations of nature from her laws, and of the mysterious agency of devastating powers, so we talk of the destruction of our fortune, the breaking up of our happiness, the wreck of our hopes. Now all this loose and faithless language arises from our not recognizing the great law to which all these are to be referred. It is no more than this : that God is disposing of what has been offered up to Him in sacrifice ; as, for instance, when a father or mother bewails the taking away of a child, have they not forgotten that

he was not their own? Did they not offer him at the font? Did not God promise to receive their oblation? What has He done more than taken them at their word? They prayed that He would make their child to be His "own child by adoption;" and He has not only heard, but answered their prayers. Have they not perpetually, since that day, asked for him the kingdom of heaven, even as the mother of Zebedee's children came and besought that her two sons might sit, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His kingdom? Like them, they knew not what they asked; they were desiring a high blessing, awful in its height; for which, if granted, they might have to go sorrowing because God has heard their prayer, and a sword has pierced through their own soul also. In an especial manner this seems true of the death of infants; they were offered up to Him, and He took them to Himself. So that they be His, who dare lament that He has chosen the place where they shall stand and minister before Him? Little, it may be, the glad mother thought as she stood beside the font, what she was then doing; little did she forecast what was to come, or read the meaning of her own acts and prayers. And so likewise, when any true servants of Christ are taken away, what is it but a token of His favourable acceptance of their self-oblation? They have been His from baptism, and He has granted them a long season of tarrying in this outer court of His temple. But now, at length, the time is come; and when we see

them "bow the head, and give up the ghost," is it not our slowness of heart that makes even our eyes also to be holden, so as not to see who is standing nigh, conforming them to His own great sacrifice? While they were with us they were not ours, but His: they were permitted to abide with us, and to gladden our hearts awhile: but they were living sacrifices, and ever at the point of being caught up to heaven.

And so, lastly, in all that befalls ourselves, we too are not our own, but His; all that we call ours is His; and when He takes it from us—first one loved treasure, then another, till He makes us poor, and naked, and solitary—let us not sorrow that we are stripped of all we love, but rather rejoice for that God accepts us: let us not think that we are left here, as it were, unseasonably alone, but remember that, by our bereavements, we are in part translated to the world unseen. He is calling us away, and sending on our treasures. The great law of sacrifice is embracing us, and must have its perfect work. Like Him, we must be made "perfect through suffering." Let us pray Him, therefore, to shed abroad in us the mind that was in Christ; that our will being crucified, we may offer up ourselves to be disposed of as He sees best, whether for joy or sorrow, blessing or chastisement; to be high or low, to be slighted or esteemed, to be full or to suffer much, to have many friends or to dwell in a lonely home; to be passed by, or called to serve Him and His kingdom in our own land, or

among people of a strange tongue ; to be, to go, to do, to suffer, even as He wills, even as He ordains, even as Christ endured, "who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God."¹ Amen.

MANNING.

XXX

But why, when He used the word of healing, did He accompany it with that sigh? We may ask the same question at the grave of Lazarus. Why did He weep when He stood by the dead man's grave, or sigh when He looked upon the deaf man's barred ears? Why did He weep when He was going to make the dead man live, or sigh when He was going to make the deaf man hear.

The answer is not a difficult one. It was His profound sense of the woes of man that so affected Him. To us, the restoration of voice or of life to the dumb or the dead is so great a thing, that it overspreads our souls with the brightest sunshine. If we have some dear friend visited with any grievous defect, and God supplies it, we are overwhelmed with joy ; or if one whom we love perhaps as life itself might seem to be hanging over the grave, and about to drop into it, and if then God should rebuke the disease, and give us good hope of restoration, our joy would be almost excessive. How different was Jesus ! He saw in His own mind both voice

¹ Heb. ix. 14.

² "And looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha."—St. Mark vii. 34.

and hearing already restored to the poor deaf stammerer, yet He sighed; He saw the flame of life already rekindled in the death-cold bosom of Lazarus, and yet He wept. Why then, again, did He sigh? and why did He weep? My brethren, it was not one poor stammerer that He came to give speech to, nor one cold corpse that He came to revive. "*I am the Resurrection and the Life*,"¹ were His own great words as He stood over the grave at Bethany. He looked over the countless dead whom sin had slain, and what was the restoration of life to one poor body, of all that host? He looked over the countless families whom death had made desolate, and what was the consolation of one little circle when so many myriads of mourners remained? Therefore He wept.

"O'erwhelming thoughts of pain and grief
Over His sinking spirit sweep :
What boots it gathering one lost leaf
Out of yon sere and wither'd heap,
Where souls and bodies, hopes and joys,
All that earth owns, or sin destroys,
Under the spurning hoof are cast,
Or tossing in th' autumnal blast?"²

This was the reason of the tears and the sighs of the Son of Man.

He looked all down the dreadful stream of human suffering. He saw,—it was a mighty part, perhaps the very mightiest part of His Passion,—He saw clearly before Him the congregated miseries of

¹ John xi. 25.

² *The Christian Year. 12th Sunday after Trinity.*

man ; He saw the strong bowed down by weakness, the healthy wasting away by the slow poison-juice of mortality ; He saw many a babe diseased from the very womb, and instead of the bright eye, and the active limb, and the quick ear and bell-like voice of childhood,—visited with the dark orb, the crippled member ; deaf, or a stammerer. He saw the perfection of human beauty consumed by some dreadful disease, like a moth fretting a lovely garment. He saw the solitary chamber, and He heard the stifled sobs of ten thousand mourners, and the cry of agony which the poor sufferer could not repress, and the racking pain which she could not—which she could scarcely, even with Thy mighty aid, O Jesus, bear ! Such was the dreadful vision which the Son of Man beheld ; a dark, wide, rolling stream of tears, and sighs, and misery ; a river of the waters of the blackness of death.

And there is solid comfort in this view of the action of our blessed Saviour. What made Him sigh then, makes Him sympathize now. The heart of Jesus is not changed : He has carried His human body¹ to heaven, and there, with His wounded hands and wounded feet, and pierced heart flowing down with water and with blood, He pities and He pleads for man. He is our sacrificing and sympathizing Priest ; Himself the sacrifice, for He lies like a Lamb slain upon the high altar of heaven ; Himself the Priest, that in the linen garments of our humanity offers up, in prevailing

¹ See IV. Article.

intercession and perfect sympathy, the prayers and the tears of His people, and perfumes them with the fragrant incense of His own merits.

Oh, what a consolation ! The sigh that arose that day from the shores of Gennesareth to heaven,—it is the very panacea for sorrow. No heart can be perfectly desolate while that sigh is audible. We may lose everything we love ; but if we think of Him who loved what we loved, ten thousand times better than we could ever love it ; if we think that He possesses what we have lost ; and if we know, (and know we do,) that He looks now, not up to heaven, but down to earth, and sends upon our beating hearts the cool breath of that most tranquillizing sigh ; if we know this all to be true, all a perfect reality, Jesus to be quite near us, as near us as our grief is near, and unfailing in sympathy, and matchless in His healing power ; then, suffer as we may, sigh as we may, and be as desolate as we can be imagined to be, yet are our sighs, and our tears, and our desolation, all, but means for our more complete cure ; very avenues of blessing ; channels cut out in the hard rocks of our stony hearts, only that the grace of His sympathy may more completely fill and refresh them.

We are told that previously to performing this cure, our blessed Lord took this poor stammerer aside.

There is a meaning in this for us all. It is in loneliness, in our solitary chamber, or in some season of more than ordinary calm and privacy, that God

often deals with the soul. The world is noisy, and feverish, and agitating, and overpowers us with its many voices, and with the din and tumult of its stunning cares. We can scarcely hear the soft whisper of the Son of Man amid that tumultuous uproar; we can scarcely distinguish His form amid the pressing crowds that are about us. It is good to be alone with God and His Christ; so good, that when we are too mad for company, He often Himself builds up some high wall of separation, or puts us in some lonely house of death, that we may be compelled to listen.

If such has been His dealing with you: if you have been taken away for a time by any calamity from the busier hum and haunts of life, it is He that has thus removed you. Has His object been answered? Have you felt His finger upon you? Has healing virtue gone out of His mouth to bless you? Have your ears been opened? Has the string of your stammering tongue been loosed? Can you now hear, and speak, and sing of Christ?

When you go into your silent chamber, ask Him to bless you, as He did the poor deaf man. When you go down by the sea-shore, and see the "little ships" all drawing their lines of light along its blue bosom, and the fishermen spreading their nets, think of the sea of Tiberias, and the boats of Peter and of the sons of Zebedee, and of Jesus, and of the crowds that listened to Him, and of the words He spake, and the wonders He performed. Bring all your maladies to Him. Present the cases of

your sick friends, of your young, happy, joyous children to Him. He stands there, we may almost say, on purpose to bless you. He stands there, that you may come and seek His blessing. Look earnestly towards Him ; try to realize His presence ; court solitude, that you may have His society ; stand apart from the multitude, that He may come and converse with you ; do not shrink from a lonely chamber, for He has cleared it that He may Himself come in ; and if you feel that you hear but little of the deep harmonies that fill creation, and if hearing but little, you only stammer when you attempt to utter them, look up to Him who stands over you with the same matchless power, and the same ineffable love ; and He (be assured), as He poured upon the deaf stammerer's tongue the music of speech, will fill your souls to their utmost depths with the harmonies of praise.

C. E. KENNAWAY.

4. If chastisement is a token of God's love, why should I faint under it, or so much as desire release from it, till it has done its work ? I *must* suffer and die ; with the help of God, I *will* suffer and die.

T. ADAM.

XXXI

The Christian prays for fuller manifestations of Christ's power and glory, and love to Him ; but he is often not aware that this is, in truth, praying to

be brought into the furnace ; for in the furnace only it is that Christ can walk with His friends, and display in their preservation and deliverance His own Almighty power : yet, when brought thither, it is one of the worst parts of the trial, that the Christian often thinks himself, for a time, at least, abandoned. Job thought so ; but, while he looked on himself as an outcast, the Infinite Spirit and the wicked spirit were holding a dialogue on his case ! He was more an object of notice and interest than the largest armies that were ever assembled, and the mightiest revolutions that ever shook the world, considered merely in their temporal interests and consequences. Let the Christian be deeply concerned, in all his trials, to honour his Master before such observers.

R. CECIL.

XXXII

God's way of answering the Christian's prayer for an increase of patience, experience, hope, and love, usually is to put him into the furnace of tribulation. St. James therefore says, "*Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.*"¹ People of the world "*count it all joy*" when they are in ease and affluence, but a Christian is taught to "*count it all joy*" when he is tried as gold in the fire.

R. CECIL.

¹ James i. 2.

XXXIII

When the privations of life have diminished the objects of social happiness ; when death has dried up the fountains which run freely with their clear and salutary waters ; when pain and disease have altered the character of existence, and changed the scene of hilarity, and buoyancy, and activity, into the scene of suffering, inactivity, patience, and abstraction from the previous intercourse of life : then to go to the throne of grace, and to draw closer the ties which no privation, nor suffering, nor vicissitude, can dissolve ; this is to connect “a time of need” with the best and brightest manifestations of mercy and grace to the soul ! Many may be the hours of comparative repinings and of wounded hopes, and of unhealthy wanderings of mind ; but these are sometimes exchanged for hours passed at the throne of grace, to which no eye but that of God is witness ; hours when Christ speaks, and pain and sorrow are forgotten ; hours, when cut off from the din of life, and separated from friends, and left alone with God, every murmuring is yet hushed, and every privation is repaid !—hours when the manifestation of the Redeemer’s glory to the soul has shed a calm and a blissful radiance around every prospect, and proved the earnest of that better heritage which is “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”

Believer in Christ ! mark well the grounds upon which the efficacy of thy prayer depends ; thy very cry of guilt and sorrow is the result of the Spirit

whose habitation thou art. Thou art the property of God, and under the sure protection of Jesus thou wilt reach thy eternal home. Pray then in faith. Consider thy great High Priest; think of the virtue of His blood, and of the prevalency of His intercession. Come boldly to His throne of grace; unfold all thy heart; lay bare to Him its guilt, defilement, weakness, and inconstancy. Implore mercy with incessant repetition of anxiety. "In every time of need seek grace to help."¹ Jesus Christ knows all thy wants, and "has received gifts," that "out of His fulness thou shouldest receive grace for grace." He has opened the way to God; He has unbarred the gates of acceptance; He has overcome death, and hell, and sin, and He bids thee "be of good cheer." Come, then, with holy confidence into His sanctuary; attach the highest value to prayer; deem it to be thy best preservative from sin, and thy best antidote to sorrow. Expect large and full relief at the throne of grace. Retreat from the accusations of conscience, from the stern voices of the law, from the calumnies of men, from the malice of Satan, from the fears and inconstancy of thine own heart: retreat from all these enemies, and take thy shelter within the sanctuary of the Lord. Thou hast an heritage in the heart of Christ; thy name is written there, and "thou shalt never be forgotten." His love cannot change, nor can His knowledge of thy case be at any time obscure. He knows all; He feels all; He will succour all.

¹ Heb. iv. 16.

Never canst thou know His inexhaustible kindness. No human conception can grasp the mighty mystery of His covenant love. But depend, confide, petition, pray : be ever a suppliant at the throne of grace. Thou art as much the object of His tender care as if thou wert His lone child in the universe of nature ! Cast, then, thy burden upon Him, and say, with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."¹

G. T. NOEL.

XXXIV

Here, in the grave of Christ, our souls, being planted in the likeness of His death, shall be planted in the likeness of His resurrection also ; and it is the same with our bodies. His death is the life of our souls, and of our bodies also, by His quickening Spirit. This His body is that seed of which He spake in the deep groanings of His suffering soul, which, if it die, shall not abide alone, but bring forth many seeds like unto itself ; for our vile body, if we be buried with Him, shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Here, therefore, must we come, not only that we may learn to live, but also that we may learn to die, and to contemplate with comfort the death of our friends ; for here may we be not only dead *with* Him, but *in* Him also ; dead, in some sense, with the faithful departed. It is here with Christ that we learn to reflect on the death of our friends, and on our own,

¹ Ps. xxiii. 1.

with peace and consolation, and in the depth of His grave to learn Christian hope.

Here the solemn calm of the great Sabbath hath already begun. In the deep stillness which is here exchanged for the anxieties and agonies, and the feverish passions and excitement of the scene that has passed, we seem to participate in the awful calm of death ; and as in life we mingle and blend our sympathies with the condition and state of our friends, and borrow their feelings, so in this calm we seem to partake of the stillness of those souls which are released from the body in that place, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."¹ And if this calm is so striking, contrasted with that which is past, still greater is that feeling of stillness in death when we contrast it with that which is to come, the great morning of the resurrection ; deep is the suspense that watches in that awful expectation ; here is that night of which our Lord spake, wherein no man can work : He hath done our work for us ; our righteousness is no longer of works, but we may rest in Him.

Blessed, therefore, is this grave, because we therein approach to the dead in Christ, and because this is the home where we ourselves shall have to dwell ; for we, too, shall soon have to make our bed in the dark, and the grave shall close its doors about us ; and before then it is the home of our buried affections, the house of all living. Here might one portray human nature itself sitting at a tomb, for our

¹ Job iii 17.

life is a continual bereavement, and as soon as we begin to know affection, we begin to mourn the loss of it. No one can have lived for any time in the world, but his best treasures and his best affections must be with the dead ; and there is no reflecting person who does not find that those parts of his life in which he sinks most deeply into himself and the knowledge of his condition are made up of those hours of stillness and solitude, where he seems to sit at the grave of those who were once like himself, full of the same thoughts, and feelings, and affections. Stillness and solitude is of itself like a holy sanctuary, wherein he seems to draw near to them ; it is that in which they are ever found ; and to draw near to them is to draw away from the world ; for wherever it is that the faithful departed are, we know that to be with them is to be with Christ.

But the dead body of Christ is left here lifeless and untenanted, not only that His dead body may sanctify death, but that His spotless soul may sanctify the place of the dead. One sacrificial animal, the sin-offering, is dead in our hands ; but the other has escaped, and gone into the wilderness, bearing sin. If the earth is hallowed and preserved from corruption because the sinless Son of man hath once made it His abode, and the flesh His tabernacle, no less must the place of the departed have derived some great blessing from the sojourn of His righteous soul among them. He

has not only made this world once the place of His abode, but has continued ever since to vouchsafe His presence to it in some high and peculiar manner, so that it is not as it was before. And thus also it is with the place of His saints that depart hence in the Lord; for since that time, "from henceforth blessed are the dead,"¹ for the good to die is "to be with Christ,"² which is "far better," and to "sleep in the Lord."³ It was of this that the Prophet Isaiah spake, "Bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house."⁴ This their darkness He has converted into His own marvellous light. Of this also spake the Prophet Zechariah, "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners, out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope."⁵

Well may we believe that place to be blessed where the soul of Christ hath been. The great Italian poet, when the scene of his poem is in the abode of the wicked, is cautious lest the ever-blessed Name should ever there escape, or be uttered in those regions of despair; whereby he meant to imply that that awful Name would burst asunder the everlasting bars of that prison-house. How much more may we suppose that—not the name uttered by the lips, but—the ever-adorable Son of God, the soul of Christ Himself, must have been of mighty avail for good in the place of the faithful departed.

¹ Rev. xiv. 13.

² Phil. i. 23.

³ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

⁴ Isa. xlii. 7.

⁵ Zech. ix. 12.

Nay, indeed, even nature itself, instinctively would suggest to us this lesson of hope ; for what reader has not been struck with wonder at Homer's description of the place of the dead, so expressive of demerit, and the expectation of righteous judgment in man, yet not without a secret hope in God ? That first and greatest of the poets describes the souls of the dead as wrapt in mysterious gloom, and powerless and silent, until they have partaken of the blood of the sacrifice. Such is the voice of nature, if it be not something greater than nature ; or the glimmering light of primeval tradition, that spoke of the great sacrifice, in the midst of that spiritual darkness, to them who wandered beneath the dim twilight of the shadow of death.

Blessed, therefore, is the thought of that intermediate state between death and resurrection : it is in some especial manner to be with Christ ; there is something in the thought very full of awe and trembling joy ; it is also to be with Abraham and all the dead who are with Christ, as they are selected and gathered out of this evil world. The more we think of it, and of those who have preceded us there, the more do we seem to approach them ; for the dwelling-place and movement of our minds depends not on bodily change of place, but on the thoughts ; we are there where our thoughts are. How aspiring, how exalting, how calming, how quickening, how hallowing, is the contemplation, that before the rising of another sun we may be in that country of the faithful departed—if found worthy to be there !

WILLIAMS.

5. If I am afflicted, or sick, or weak, or in pain, let me not comfort myself chiefly with thinking that it will be quickly over, or that I shall soon be well, but rather with thinking and knowing that it is the appointment of Divine wisdom,—for reasons of infinite concernment to myself, and for the end which God has chiefly in view for His people, in all His inflictions, viz., the glory of His name in their spiritual health and recovery; and a blessed support it will be to know and feel that I do not so much desire ease and deliverance from present trouble, as grace and strength to undergo more and greater, and even death itself, quietly, obediently, in the spirit of faith, and with full acceptance of the will of God.

T. ADAM.

XXXV

Such, then, were our Lord's sufferings, voluntarily undergone, and ennobled by an active obedience; themselves the centre of our hopes and worship, yet borne without thoughts of self, towards God, and for man. And who among us habitually dwells upon them, but is led, without deliberate purpose, by the very warmth of gratitude and adoring love, to attempt bearing his own inferior trials in the same heavenly mind? Who does not see that to bear pain well is to meet it courageously? not to shrink or waver, but to pray for God's help; then to look at it stedfastly,—to summon what nerve we have of mind or body to meet its attack, and to

bear up against it (while strength is given to us) as against some visible enemy in close combat. Who will not acknowledge, that when sent to us, we must make its presence, as it were, our own voluntary act, by the cheerful and ready acquiescence of our own will with the will of God? Nay, who is there but must own, that with Christ's sufferings before us, pain and tribulation are, after all, not only the most blessed, but even the most congruous attendants upon those who are called to inherit the benefit of them? Most congruous, I say, not as though necessary, but as most natural and befitting; harmonizing most fully with the main object in the group of sacred wonders on which the Church is called to gaze. Who, on the other hand, does not at least perceive that all the glare and gaudiness of this world, its excitements, its keenly-pursued goods, its successes and its transports, its pomps and its luxuries, are not in character with that pale and solemn scene which faith must ever have in its eye? What Christian will not own that to "reign as kings," and to be "full," is not his calling? so as to derive comfort in the hour of sickness or bereavement, or other affliction, from the thought that he is now in his place, if he be Christ's in his true home, the sepulchre in which his Lord was laid.

.

Could we see the Cross upon Calvary, and the list of sufferers who resisted unto blood in the times that followed it, is it possible that we should feel

surprise when pain overtook us, or impatience at its continuance? Is it strange though we are smitten by ever so new a plague? Is it grievous that the cross presses upon one nerve or limb ever so many years, till hope of relief is gone? Is it indeed not possible, with the Apostle, to rejoice in "bearing in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus?"¹ And much more can we, for very shame-sake, suffer ourselves to be troubled at what is but ordinary pain, to be irritated or saddened, made gloomy or anxious by inconvenience, which could never surprise or unsettle those who had studied and understood their place as servants of a crucified Lord?

Let us, then, determine, with cheerful hearts, to sacrifice unto the Lord our God our comforts and pleasures, however innocent, when He calls for them, whether for the purposes of His Church or in His own inscrutable purposes. Let us lend to Him a few short hours of present ease, and we shall receive our own with abundant usury in the day of His coming. There is a treasury in heaven, stored with such offerings as the natural man abhors,—with sighs and tears, wounds and blood, torture and death. The martyrs first began the contribution, and we may all follow them; all of us, for every suffering, great or small, may, like the widow's mite, be sacrificed to Him who sent it. Christ gave us the words of consecration when He for our example said, "Thy will be done." Hence-

¹ Gal. vi. 17.

forth, as the Apostle speaks, we may glory in tribulation as the seed of future glory. Meanwhile, let us never forget, in all we suffer, that, properly speaking, our own sin is the cause of it; and it is only by Christ's mercy that we are allowed to range ourselves at His side. We who are children of wrath, are made through Him children of grace; and our pains, which are in themselves foretastes of hell, are changed by the sprinkling of His blood into a preparation for heaven. NEWMAN.

XXXVI

How gracious is this revelation of God's particular providence to those who seek Him! how gracious to those who have discovered that this world is but vanity, and who are solitary and isolated in themselves, whatever shadows of power and happiness surround them! The multitude, indeed, go on without these thoughts, either from insensibility, as not understanding their own wants, or changing from one idol to another, as each successively fails: but men even of keener hearts would be overpowered by despondency, and would even loathe existence, did they suppose themselves under the mere operation of fixed laws, powerless to excite the pity or the attention of Him who has appointed them. What should they do, especially, who are cast among persons unable to enter into their feelings, and thus strangers to them, though by long custom ever so much friends; or have

perplexities of mind they cannot explain to themselves, much less remove, and no one to help them ; or have affections and aspirations pent up within them, because they have not met with objects to which to devote them ; or are misunderstood by those around them, and find they have no words to set themselves right with them, or no principles in common, by way of appeal ; or seem to themselves to be without place or purpose in the world, or to be in the way of others ; or have to follow their own sense of duty, without advisers or supporters ; nay, to resist the wishes and solicitations of superiors or relatives, or the burden of some painful secret, or of some incommunicable solitary grief ! In all such cases the Gospel narrative supplies our very need, not simply presenting to us an unchangeable Creator to rely upon, but a compassionate Guardian, a discriminating Judge and Helper. God beholds thee individually, whoever thou art ; He calls thee by thy name : He sees thee and understands thee ; as He made thee, He knows what is in thee ; all thy own peculiar feelings and thoughts, thy dispositions and likings, thy strength and thy weakness : He views thee in thy day of rejoicing and thy day of sorrow : He sympathizes in thy hopes and temptations : He interests Himself in all thy anxieties and remembrances,—all the risings and fallings of thy spirits : He has numbered the very hairs of thy head, and the cubits of thy stature : He compasses thee round, and bears thee in His arms : He takes thee up, and he sets

thee down : He notes thy very countenance, whether smiling or in tears,—whether healthful or sickly : He looks tenderly upon thy hands and thy feet : He hears thy voice, the beating of thy heart, and thy very breathing. Thou dost not love thyself better than He loves thee : thou canst not shrink from pain more than He dislikes thy bearing it ; and if He puts it on thee, it is as thou wilt put it on thyself for a greater good afterwards. Thou art not only His creature (though for the very sparrows He has a care, and pitied the much cattle of Nineveh) ; thou art man redeemed and sanctified, His adopted son, favoured with a portion of that glory and blessedness which flows from Him everlastingly unto the Only-begotten. Thou wast one of those for whom Christ offered up His last prayer, and sealed it with His precious blood. What a thought is this !—a thought almost too great for our faith. Scarce can we refrain from acting Sarah's part, when we bring it before us, so as to laugh from amazement and perplexity. What is man, what are we, what am I, that the Son of God should have been so mindful of me ? What am I, that He should have changed my soul's original constitution ; new-made me, who from youth up have been a transgressor ; and should Himself dwell personally in this very heart of mine, making me His temple ? What am I, that God the Holy Ghost should enter me and draw up my thoughts heavenwards, "with plaints unutterable ?"

NEWMAN.

XXXVII

Affliction is a great realizer in religion, or rather a great detector of the want of reality in religion. We, perhaps, thought ourselves Christians, and that we were founded on the rock; and now an affliction comes, and we shake like aspen-leaves. Could this be, if we were really on the rock? We thought fondly that God was the chosen portion of our souls, and that, though all created things were taken from us, we had enough when we had Him; and yet, when He crosses some desire of our hearts; or removes some of His own gifts,—a friend, perhaps, or even a little of the world's trash,—we seem as if we had lost our all, and cry after it as that Danite did after his idols; and thus we learn the fact that our comfort before did not, as we idly supposed, flow from the eternal fountain (for that still remains to us), but had been drawn from perishing cisterns; and therefore, now that they are broken, we die of thirst. This is an important discovery, and it was to make this discovery to us that God sent the affliction. Let us, then, receive it in deep humility; let us receive it as a call from God to leave the creature behind us, and go directly into His own more immediate presence, into His inner chamber.

Reader, will you allow me to speak a word to you on this matter? Beware of occupying your mind as to how the affliction happened, or how it

might have been prevented. Think not of the oversight, or folly, or malice, which may appear to you to be the immediate occasion of it. God did it; and you must bid away all second causes from your thought, and carry the affliction to His throne of grace, and cast it and yourself before Him; and ask Him to save your soul, and to deliver you from resting on any created portion; and pray Him to become Himself your real, and true, and everlasting portion. Take care that this affliction be not lost. *Abide* in His presence, and be jealous of receiving comfort from any other source; you may lose your affliction if you do. And, oh! remember that holiness is of more importance than comfort. Be still more anxious for profit from your own affliction, than for support under it. You are an immortal creature, and eternity is your great concern. Holiness is *eternal* happiness—comfort may be the affair of *an hour*. And God sends affliction, that we may become partakers of His holiness.

Let me conclude by saying, that all is to be looked for and received from God: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."¹ It is the soul that receives *all* from God, which alone can feel itself to be the property of God; His property to guide and to command; His property to bless and to keep; His highly-prized property, purchased at no less a cost than the death of Christ, for this very end, that He might sanctify it in time, and glorify it in eternity. The soul that feels this has peace; it

¹ Ps. lxxxi. 10.

does not make haste, for it knows how secure it is. It possesses the secret of the Lord, that secret which does for all circumstances and contingencies—which does for life, for death, for duty, for suffering—which gives the spirit of a pilgrim, and yet a willing servant—which gives the foretaste of the joy of heaven, as it is the commencement of the character of heaven.

T. ERSKINE.

6. How can we complain, or think hardly of God for anything He does, or have the least doubt of His goodness, when He has given His Son to die for us?

T. ADAM.

XXXVIII

Many owe their extrication from the ruin of this world to affliction, to some sanctified sorrow, and to none more frequently than to the loss of relatives or friends. Our once cheerful home is now become a house of mourning; there is a blank in the domestic circle which nothing earthly can fill up; and every object to which surviving friends can look, repeats the same sad story, that the desire of their eyes is taken from them; and yet these seasons are sometimes blessed beyond all description: and many have known more happiness, even in the multitude of their sorrows, than they ever knew before; for often will that Being, who came to heal the broken-hearted, seize the softened moments, and visit the mourner as he sits in solitary moments. In

Him the afflicted find a friend formed for adversity,—one who can penetrate the soul, and converse with all that is most intimate and peculiar in our bereavement,—one who knew the object for which we grieve better than we did ourselves, one who was Himself “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”¹ In sympathizing with Him, the soul is gently lifted above the world. It becomes the sweetest consolation to think of that blessed place, where we shall see our friends again, and fall down before the throne of Him who comforted us in our troubles. These are “tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.” These sorrows are turned into joy; they unite us to Him who is the salvation of the soul; they bring us to that High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and through Him we cast our anchor within the veil.

WOODWARD.

7. O that sigh! Do happy people ever sigh? I find I want something which God will not suffer me to have; and till we are of the same mind, life can be nothing at bottom but one perpetual sigh.

T. ADAM.

XXXIX

Jesus lived, offering up His own blood in submissive confidence. He is thus our pattern; and He is more than our pattern, for in Him the grace of God, and the forgiveness of sins committed dur-

¹ Isa. liii. 3.

ing the sparing mercy of God, are freely declared to the Chief of Sinners, and through Him living water is communicated, enabling those who will receive it to walk in the same steps towards the same glory.

That spiritual stream comes back to us, as it were, through the gates of death—from the other side of the gulf; and thus it is a stranger here, for its home and its interests are all on the other side; and as it is itself a stranger, it makes those to become strangers and pilgrims who receive it: they seek back to the fountain-head of their life, and desire to be with him; and as they know that it is only through sorrow and death that they can arrive at Him, they enter into the counsel of God in His plan of leading them in this way, with their whole hearts.

T. ERSKINE.

XL

Saul had anxiously inquired, "What wouldest thou have me to *do*?"¹ Our Lord sends His minister to tell him, not what great things he shall do, but what far greater things he shall *suffer*. Sufferings are, after all, the great achievements of the Christian. Where one man is permitted to effect mighty things for his Lord, by carrying the words of the everlasting Gospel over the burning sands of Africa, or the frozen mountains of the north, thousands and tens of thousands are called to the high privilege of the Philippians of old, "not only to believe, but also to suffer for His name's sake."² To sit on His right hand and on His left, are not

¹ Acts ix. 6.

² Phil. i. 29.

now to be given ; but to drink of His cup of trial, and to be baptized with His baptism of affliction, are still among the choicest blessings which He bestows upon His people. Be not, then, disappointed, my beloved brethren, if, with every desire to do great things for your Divine Master, you are denied the power or the opportunity. If, as has been beautifully said, "They also serve who only stand and wait," how much more do they serve who are called upon to endure and to suffer? Yes ; in the chamber of sickness, upon the bed of pain, you may as greatly glorify your Redeemer, as amid the trials of the mission, or the tortures of the stake : and often does it please your Heavenly Father, that while you are meditating what great things you shall do for Christ, He is preparing the great things you shall suffer.

Endeavour, therefore, to live in that spiritual frame of mind, that you may be daily willing, at the bidding of your Lord, to take up the cross, and to follow His footsteps, though they may lead you through many a toilsome track, or guide you through many a thorny passage. In your journey to the heavenly country, you must encounter trials, and troubles, and sorrow ; no child of God was ever yet without them ; not one of all that countless multitude in white robes, with palms in their hands, but "came out of great tribulation :"¹ how can you therefore expect or desire to escape that of which all the other children in God's dear family have so

¹ Rev. vii. 14.

largely partaken? "Think it not, therefore, strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."¹ Dwell much and frequently upon the views of that "eternal weight of glory;" it will tend more than any other consideration to teach you to form a correct and spiritual estimate of your "light afflictions."² It was thus that the Apostle of whom we are speaking, (St. Paul,) at a later period of his Christian course, was enabled to bear, (and to bear without repining,) an infinitely heavier load of suffering than will ever be laid on you. He cast all his trials, all his sorrows, all his sufferings, into one scale, and after consideration of them, declares them to be light, and but for a moment. He then lays the glory in the other scale, and pronounces it to be ponderous, weighty, and eternal, an exceeding "weight of glory." In the one is sorrow for a little while, in the other eternal joy. In the one, pain for a few moments; in the other, everlasting rest. In the one is the loss of some few temporary things; in the other, the full fruition of God in Christ, who is "all in all."

H. BLUNT.

XLI

Our life from baptism to our death should be a

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.

² 2 Cor. iv. 17.

practice of the Cross, a learning to be crucified, a crucifixion of our passions, appetites, desires, wills, until one by one they be all nailed, and we have no will but the will of our Father which is in heaven. Men and brethren, soldiers, servants, ensign-bearers of Christ, what are we doing? We were baptized into our Saviour's death, our Saviour's cross: we too bear upon our brows the imprinted cross, unseen of men, but seen of angels, seen of Satan,—“the seal of God upon our foreheads;”¹ but was it placed there an idle sign? Had it no meaning? Was the sign of the cross to be worn in the midst of luxury and ease? Were the sworn soldiers of the cross to live softly?

Our Lord, too, who bore the cross for us, preached the cross: hear Him! “He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” (Matt. x. 38.) “Then said He to His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke ix. 23.)

Would any know how to begin bearing the cross? Some crosses God, from our very childhood, has in His goodness provided for us, that in them we may learn, what of ourselves we should have had no courage to begin. We speak of the “crosses” of daily life, and forget that our very language is a witness against us: how meekly we ought to bear them, in the blessed steps of our Holy Lord; how, in “every cross and care,” we

¹ Rev. vii. 3.

ought not to acquiesce simply, but to take them cheerfully,—not cheerfully only, but joyfully ; yea, if they should even deserve the name of tribulation, to “joy in tribulation”¹ also, as seeing in them our Father’s hand, our Saviour’s cross. So walking on earth, we may be in heaven : the ill tempers of others, the slights and rudenesses of the world, ill health, the daily accidents with which God has mercifully strewed our paths, instead of ruffling or disturbing our peace, may cause the peace of God to be “shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which is given to us.”²

ANON.

XLII

JOB xxxvii. 21

“And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds ; but the wind passeth and cleanseth them.”

So speaks Elihu, in the solemn and sublime address which he makes to Job. “Now we see through a glass darkly ;”³ so writes the Apostle to the early converts at Corinth, when telling them of the character of their state and calling. The “now” of Elihu is the present hour, the present day, the present month or year ; the “now” of the Apostle is the whole scope of the present chequered life. Of both, the same great truth is justly to be predicated. We live in constant twilight ; we cannot see by the clear broad light of day the exact

¹ Rom. v. 3.

² Rom. v. 5.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

colour and character of God's providences ; some small part is revealed, but a far larger is hidden ; we see the clouds, but we cannot understand them, we cannot interpret them ; they have a meaning, but we cannot tell exactly what it is ; it is an enigma, a riddle, a mystery ; and it must continue to be so until time draws up the veil of the future, and God, the revealer of secrets, displays to His waiting, wondering, adoring servants, the glory and the beauty of all this mysterious dispensation.

"The wind," says Elihu, "passeth and cleanseth them." "Then," says the Apostle to the Corinthians, "then shall we see face to face."¹ The clouds of Providence shall be dispersed at last : the wind shall clear and cleanse the long-darkened sky ; we shall see face to face : the day-dawn of another world shall succeed to the long and laborious gloom of this ; the shadows shall flee away ; and as God Himself sees, so almost shall *we* see in open vision His unclouded glory.

It was to explain to the uneasy and anxious mind of Job, or if not to explain, at least to illustrate the character of God's dealings, that Elihu spoke these words. Let us ask and wait for the aid of the Holy Spirit, while we endeavour to ascertain their meaning.

First, and generally, they place before us a moral truth under a natural appearance. They bid us look at the clouds that hang heavily over the landscape : how dark and gloomy they seem ! They

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

are like a great curtain let down and drawn before us ; they seem to shut out all light, to exclude all hope, to veil and almost to extinguish all beauty. We can scarcely believe but that all that is behind them is as melancholy as they are themselves ; it seems as if heaven (I mean the natural heaven) were all cloud ; as if, pierce deep as we might into its bosomed gloom, we should still find nothing but cold, and darkness, and mist. We may have seen the blue depths of the vaulted heaven a thousand times before ; we may have rejoiced in their azure glory ; we may have felt the strange and mysterious charm of their power upon our souls ; but it is all now as if it had never been ; we only see the rolling world of clouds that swim above us, and that fill our minds as well as our sight, and seem to blot out every trace of former sunlight, and almost to destroy every possibility of future gladness.

It is in words like those before us that we are thus taught a moral lesson by a natural type. "Look at those clouds," (so the Holy Spirit would seem to speak to us by Elihu ;) "look at those clouds, so deep, so dark, so continuous, and casting so thick a veil over the whole face of the sky ! they are not what they appear ; they are neither so deep nor so abiding as they seem. It is true that they have hung there since the dawn, that they may remain till the hour of evening, and that perhaps for many days longer they shall continue to hang there ; but they shall not be perpetual,—a time shall come when they shall be scattered and

removed. It is also true that they may be unbroken, and that their darkness may seem unrelieved by a single ray of sunshine ; but it is not so : there is light in their bosoms ; they carry an inward glory ; they are the hiding-places of the sun's burning rays ; there are rainbow glories moving and playing like the fire among the cherubim of Ezekiel, all through their wondrous depths. Go to some tall mountain, on whose bright summit the sunshine lives ; up which the clouds cannot climb, it is so high : look down upon those very clouds that appear to you so impenetrably gloomy, and they seem like one swelling sea of silver waves ; it is glory, and brightness, and beauty, in one continuous and wonderful extent and succession. You see not now, as the text tells us, ' the light that is in them ; ' but though you do not see it, it is there. It is your weakness, your low and abject condition, your earthly station, that makes you see nothing but the gloom of a sad day in that welkin which, within it and above, is all burning with beauty and glory."

Such is the *natural* truth ; such is the reality of that picture which the clouds present to us, when examined and considered. But what does this tell us about ourselves ? This is our great concern. What does it reveal to us of the world of providence, or of the world of grace ?

It tells us that, as there are clouds in the natural world, so will there be dark-shadows on the heart of man. They are necessary. God would not bring them over His people if they were not so, for

“He doth not afflict willingly.”¹ They are indispensable for the carrying on of His great scheme of grace. They are necessary for those whom He is bringing to the knowledge of Himself on earth ; and they are equally indispensable for those, whom having brought to this knowledge of Himself on earth, He is bringing to the sight and to the enjoyment of Himself in heaven. They are necessary first to soften the heart ; they are equally necessary afterwards to sanctify the heart. The reason and the necessity of these clouds is, that if the world were all sunshine, unconverted men would, humanly speaking, never leave it for God ; they would “dote and be mad upon their idols.”² The further reason and necessity is, that men, vitally renewed, might be too contented with the tranquil flow of an easy life ; they would make no great struggles for virtue ; they would offer no strong prayers for holiness ; they would dwell in the region of a torpid contentment ; they would not press and soar to the upper region of a glorious and seraphic existence. “It is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God,”³ because it is through much tribulation, and through many clouds, that we must be made fit to enter.

But where, you will ask, is the bright light ? Behind these clouds it is that the light is dwelling. It is the dark side of the moral and the spiritual cloud which we now see ; but there is a bright, and a beautiful, and a blessed light, on its upper

¹ Lam. iii. 33.

² Jer. i. 38.

³ Acts xiv. 22.

and its heavenly side. How happy were the children of men, could they but believe this ! It is so, whether they believe it or not ; their happiness, their peace, their present and eternal interest, is to believe it. Look at that sorrowful man going on in darkness of soul, and in darkness of fortune, his goods daily diminishing, or his health declining, or family sorrows shaking with successive blows his agitated heart : it is cloud above, around, within : all life seems dreary, all hope wears the livery of despair. Where is the light in his many clouds ? Where is the bright light which the text speaks of ? It is in the intention of God ; it is in the method which God is taking to lead him to Himself. Let this knowledge burst upon his soul, and all at once is changed. The gloomy cloud "turns forth its silver lining on the night." He sees God's handwriting ; and as clearly as if a Daniel were there to interpret it, he can understand all its meaning, and discover all its mercy.

But if it be thus with him whom God is bringing to Himself, it is especially so with every faithful child already brought. Their Father has taught them to read His own handwriting ; they have been in His school ; they have learned Heaven's holy alphabet ; they can see now earthly sorrow is the heavenly name for joy, and bodily pain for spiritual improvement, and the present wounding of the heart for its healing and eternal cure.

When we see, therefore, a saintly soul bowed down by affliction of heart, or tried by the long and

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heavy trial of some tormenting disease, we are able at once to solve the great riddle of suffering holiness; we see the "light in the cloud," we gather the meaning of the mystery, we see that God is taking (so to speak) the greatest pains to make His child a holy son.

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth;"¹ the heart of the sufferer owns the truth: it leaps even in the midst of its pain, and joyfully confesses it:—

"The eye that looks at things aright
Sees through the clouds the deep blue light;
And from the bank, all mire and wet,
Plucks the fresh blooming violet."

He has, moreover, a deep inner thought which ever consoles him. "Thou art my portion, O Lord."² This is his heart-music. In the midst of sorrow he can say and sing it. "And if it be so, why my very portion is my chastener; it is the indwelling Spirit that is correcting me; it is myself, my better, my heavenly self, that is laying on the smarting rod. Could I look behind, could I see the bright and silver side of things, I should confess, without the smallest hesitation, that there was not a single pang with which my heart was quivering that was not necessary for my sanctification."

But those clouds shall not always remain on the heart. "The wind passeth and cleanseth them." The cloud is cleansed; it is a beautiful and expressive term; its dark parts are taken away, its bright parts remain. All the saints have found it

¹ Heb. xii. 6.

² Lam. iii. 24.

so. Noah, Daniel, Job ; even in this life the cloud passed away from each, and only the bright light of ten thousand happy beams of joy, and love, and grace, remained. So shall it be to you, sons of God, and servants of Him on whom in this life the sunbeams of happiness never fell ! Even in this world (have you not already experienced it ?) heaviness has often endured only for a night,—joy has come in the morning. But should no bright after-piece succeed to the darkness that now oppresses you ; should no noon-day sun burst through the rolling clouds of your present sorrow ; should the heavy gloom continue during all the circling hours of your life's long day, yet still "at eventide it shall be light." The sunset and the evening of this present world shall be the type of the morning of the other ; you shall lie down quietly in the faith of Christ, and "wake up in His likeness, and be satisfied."¹

KENNAWAY.

8. Conquest of temptation, deliverance from the power of evil habits, and a ready compliance with the will of God, in answer to prayer, are much better proofs of His favourable presence than joyous feelings. The latter may be mistaken, but the former are as sure marks of the Divine operation and blessing, as that a plentiful crop of corn has had the benefit of rain and sunshine.

T. ADAM.

¹ Ps. xvii. 15.

XLIII

It is Thy title, O Lord, and only Thine, that Thou givest "songs in the night." (Job xxxv. 10.) The night is a sad and dolorous season ; as the light, contrarily, is the image of cheerfulness. (Eccl. xi. 7.) Like as it is in bodily pains and aches, that they are still worst towards night ; so it is in the cares and griefs of the mind : then they assault us most when they are helped on by the advantage of an uncomfortable darkness. Many men can give themselves songs in the day of their prosperity, who can but howl in the night of their affliction ; but for a Paul and Silas to sing in their prison at midnight (Acts xvi. 25) ; for an Asaph to "call to remembrance his song in the night" (Ps. lxxvii. 6) ; this comes only from that Spirit of Thine, whose peculiar style is "the Comforter ;" and surely, as music sounds best in the night, so those heavenly notes of praise which we sing to Thee, our God, in the gloomy darkness of our adversity, cannot but be most pleasing in Thine ears. Thine Apostle bids us (which is our ordinary wont) when we are merry to sing ; when afflicted to pray : but if, when we are afflicted, we can sing ; as also, when we are merriest we can pray ; that song must needs be so much more acceptable unto Thee, as it is a more powerful effect of the joy of Thy Holy Ghost.

O my God, I am conscious of my own infirmity : I know I am naturally subject to a dull heaviness, under whatsoever affliction. Thou, that art the God

of all comfort, remedy this heartless disposition in me ; pull this lead out of my bosom : make me not patient only, but cheerful, under my trials : fill Thou my heart with joy, and my mouth with songs, in the night of my tribulation.

As there is a perfect union betwixt the glorious saints in heaven, and a union (though imperfect) betwixt the saints on earth, so there is a union (partly perfect and partly imperfect) between the saints in heaven and the saints below upon earth ; perfect in respect of those glorified saints above, imperfect in respect of the weak returns we are able to make them again. Let no man think, that because those blessed souls are out of sight, far distant in another world, and we are here toiling in a vale of tears, that we have therefore lost all mutual regard to each other ; no, there is still, and ever will be, a secret but unfailing correspondence between heaven and earth. The present happiness of those heavenly citizens cannot have abated aught of their knowledge and charity, but must needs have raised them to a higher pitch of both. They, therefore, who are now glorious comprehensors, cannot but in a generality retain the notice of the sad condition of us poor travellers here below, panting towards our rest together with them, and in common wish for the happy consummation of this our weary pilgrimage, in the fruition of their glory. That they have any perspective whereby they can see down into our particular wants, is that which we find no ground to believe. It is enough that

they have a universal apprehension of the estate of Christ's warfaring Church upon the face of the earth, (Rev. vi. 10,) and, as fellow-members of the same mystical body, long for a perfect glorification of the whole.

As for us wretched pilgrims, who are yet left here below to try with many difficulties, we cannot forget that better half of us which is now triumphant in glory. O ye blessed saints above, we honour your memories so far as we ought; we do with praise recount your virtues; we magnify your victories; we bless God for your happy exemption from the misery of this world, and for your estate in that blessed immortality; we imitate your holy examples; we long and pray for a happy consociation with you; we dare not raise temples, dedicate altars, direct prayers to you; we dare not, finally, offer anything to you which you are unwilling to receive, nor put anything upon you which you would disclaim as prejudicial to your Creator and Redeemer. It is abundant comfort to us that some part of us is in the fruition of that glory, whereto we (the other poor labouring part) desire and strive to aspire; that our heads and shoulders are above water, whilst the other limbs are yet wading through the stream.

If ever thou look for sound comfort on earth, and salvation in heaven, unglue thyself from the world, and the vanities of it; put thyself upon thy Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; leave not till thou findest thyself firmly united to Him, so as thou

art become a limb of that body whereof He is the Head, a spouse of that husband, a branch of that stem, a stone laid upon that foundation. Look not, therefore, for any blessing out of Him : and in, and by, and from Him, look for all blessings ; let Him be thy life, and wish not to live longer than thou art quickened by Him ; find Him thy wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption ; thy riches, thy strength, thy glory. Apply unto thyself all that thy Saviour is, or hath done. Wouldst thou have the graces of God's Spirit?—fetch them from His anointing. Wouldst thou have power against spiritual enemies?—fetch it from His sovereignty. Wouldst thou have redemption?—fetch it from His passion. Wouldst thou have absolution?—fetch it from His perfect innocence. Freedom from the curse?—fetch it from His cross. Satisfaction?—fetch it from His sacrifice. Cleansing from sin?—fetch it from His blood. Mortification?—fetch it from His grave. Newness of life?—fetch it from His resurrection. Right to heaven?—fetch it from His purchase. Audience in all thy suits?—fetch it from His intercession. Wouldst thou have salvation?—fetch it from His session at the right hand of Majesty. Wouldst thou have all?—fetch it from Him who is “one Lord, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in all.”¹ And as thy faith shall thus interest thee in Christ, thy Head ; so let thy charity unite thee to His

¹ Eph. iv. 5, 6.

body the Church, both in earth and heaven. Hold ever an inviolable communion with that holy and blessed fraternity. Sever not thyself from it either in judgment or affection. Make account there is not one of God's saints upon earth but hath a property in thee, and thou mayest challenge the same in each of them, so that thou canst not but be sensible of their passions; and be freely communicative of all thy graces, and all serviceable offices, by example, admonition, exhortation, consolation, prayer, beneficence, for the good of that sacred community.

And when thou raisest up thine eyes to heaven, think of that glorious society of blessed saints who are gone before thee, and who are now there triumphing, and reigning in eternal and incomprehensible glory; bless God for them, and wish thyself with them; tread in their holy steps, and be ambitious of that crown of glory and immortality which thou seest shining on their heads.

BISHOP HALL.

XLIV

When these things are taken care for, let the sick man so order his affairs that he have but very little conversation with the world, but wholly (as he can) attend to religion, and antedate his conversation in heaven, always having intercourse with God, and still conversing with the holy Jesus; kissing His wounds, admiring His goodness, begging His

mercy, feeding on Him with faith, and drinking His blood : to which purpose it were very fit (if all circumstances be answerable) that the narrative of the passion of Christ be read or discoursed to him at length, or in brief, according to the style of the four Gospels : but, in all things, let his care and society be as little secular as is possible.

Now we suppose the man entering upon his scene of sorrows and passive graces. It may be he went yesterday to a wedding, merry and brisk, and there he felt his sentence that he must return home and die : then he must consider that all those discourses he hath heard concerning patience and resignation, and conformity to Christ's sufferings, and the melancholy lectures of the cross, must, all of them, now be reduced to practice, and pass from an effective contemplation to such an exercise as will really try whether we were true disciples of the cross, or only believed the doctrines of religion when we were at ease, and that they never passed through the ear to the heart, and dwelt not in our spirits. But every man should consider God does nothing in vain ; that He would not, to no purpose, send us preachers, and give us rules, and furnish us with discourse, and lend us books, and provide sermons, and make examples, and promise His Spirit, and describe the blessedness of holy sufferings, and prepare us with daily alarms, if He did not really propose to order our affairs, so that we should need all this, and use it all. There were no such thing as the grace of patience, if we were not

to feel a sickness, or enter into a state of sufferings ; whither, when we are entered, we are to practise by the following rules :—

At the first address and presence of sickness, stand still and arrest thy spirit, that it may, without amazement or affright, consider that this was that thou lookedst for, and wert always certain should happen ; and that now thou art to enter into the actions of a new religion, the agony of a strange constitution : but at no hand suffer thy spirits to be dispersed with fear or wildness of thought, but stay their looseness and dispersion by a serious consideration of the present and future employment. For so doth the Libyan lion, which, spying the fierce huntsman, first beats himself with the strokes of his tail, and curls up his spirits, making them strong with union and recollection, till, being struck with a Mauritanian spear, he rushes forth into his defence and noblest contention, and either escapes into the secrets of his own dwelling, or else dies the bravest of the forest. Every man, when shot with an arrow from God's quiver, must then draw in the auxiliaries of reason, and know, that then is the time to try his strength, and to reduce the words of religion into action. Let him set his heart firm upon this resolution : " I must bear it inevitably ; and I will, by God's grace, do it nobly."

↳ Bear, in thy sickness, all along the same thoughts, propositions, and discourses, concerning thy person, thy life and death, thy soul and religion, which thou

hadst in the best days of thy health; and when thou didst discourse wisely concerning things spiritual. Consider, when you were better able to judge and govern the accidents of your life, you concluded it necessary to trust in God, and possess your souls with patience. Think of things as they think who stand by you, and as you did when you stood by others; that it is a blessed thing to be patient; that a quietness of spirit hath a certain reward; that still there is infinite truth and reality in the promises of the Gospel; that still thou art in the care of God, in the condition of a son, and working out thy salvation with labour and pain, with fear and trembling; that now the sun is under a cloud, but it still sends forth the same influence.

Do not choose the kind of thy sickness, or the manner of thy death; but let it be what God please, so it be no greater than thy spirit or thy patience, and for that you are to rely upon the promise of God, and to secure thyself by prayer and industry, but in all things else let God be thy chooser, and let it be thy work to submit indifferently, and attend thy duty. Be importunate, that thy spirit and its interest be secured, and let Him do what seemeth good in His eyes. And as, in the degree of sickness, thou art to submit to God, so in the kind of it (supposing equal degrees) thou art to be altogether incurious whether God will call thee by a consumption or an asthma, by a dropsy or a palsy, by a fever in thy humours, or a fever in thy spirits; because all such nicety of choice is nothing but a

colour to a legitimate impatience, and to make an excuse to murmur privately, and for circumstances, when in the sum of affairs we durst not own impatience.

Be patient in the desires of religion, and take care that the forwardness of exterior actions do not discompose thy spirit; while thou fearest that, by less serving God in thy disability, thou runnest backward in the accounts of pardon and the favour of God. Be content that the time, which was formerly spent in prayer, be now spent in carefulness and attendances; since God hath pleased it should be so, it does not become us to think hard thoughts concerning it. Do not think that God is only to be found in a great prayer or a solemn office; He is moved by a sigh, by a groan, by an act of love; and therefore, when your pain is great and pungent, lay all your strength upon it to bear it patiently: when the evil is somewhat more tolerable, let your mind think some pious, though short meditation: let it not be very busy, and full of attention, for that will be but a new temptation to your patience, and render your religion tedious and hateful. If you can do more, do it; but if you cannot, let it not become a scruple to thee. We must not think man is tied to the forms of health, or that he who swoons and faints is obliged to his usual forms and hours of prayer: if we cannot labour, yet let us love; nothing can hinder us from that but our own uncharitableness.

Be obedient to thy physician in those things that

concern him, if he be a person fit to minister unto thee. God is He only that needs no help, and God hath created the physician for thine : therefore use him temperately, without violent confidence ; and sweetly, without uncivil distrustings. Physicians are the ministers of God's mercies and providence, in the matter of health and ease, of restitution or death ; and when God shall enable their judgments, and direct their counsels, and prosper their medicines, they shall do thee good, for which you must give God thanks, and to the physician the honour of a blessed instrument : but this cannot always be done.

Treat thy nurses and servants sweetly, and as it becomes an obliged and necessitous person. Remember that thou art very troublesome to them ; that they trouble not thee willingly ; that they strive to do thee ease and benefit ; that they wish it, and sigh and pray for it, and are glad if thou likest their attendance ; that whatsoever is amiss is thy disease, and the uneasiness of thy head or thy side, thy distemper or thy disaffection ; and it will be an unhandsome injustice to be troublesome to them because thou art so to thyself.

Let not the smart of your sickness make you to call violently for death ; you are not patient unless you be content to live. God hath made sufferance to be thy work : and do not impatiently long for evening, lest at night thou findest the reward of him that was weary of his work. BISHOP TAYLOR.

9. If I felt for the disorder and danger of my

soul, as I do for my body in pain and sickness, I should look out every way for help ; be a thousand times more anxious for its recovery than I am ; submit to any method of cure, and say unfeignedly to God, "*Ure, feri, seca*," that is, "Burn, strike, cut."

T. ADAM.

XLV

Let these be your thoughts, brethren, especially in the spring season, when the whole face of nature is so rich and beautiful. Once only in the year does the world which we see show forth its hidden powers, and in a manner manifest itself: then the leaves come out, and the blossoms on the fruit-trees and flowers, and the grass and corn spring up. There is a sudden rush and burst outwardly of that hidden life which God has lodged in the material world. Well, that shows you, as by a sample, what it can do at God's command, when He gives the word. This earth, which now buds forth in leaves and blossoms, will one day burst forth into a new world of life and glory, in which we shall see saints and angels dwelling. Who would think, except from his experience of former springs, all through his life,—who would conceive two or three months before that it was possible that the face of nature, which then seemed so lifeless, should become so splendid and vain? How different is a tree, how different is a prospect, when leaves are on it and off it! How unlikely it

would seem, before the event, that the dry and naked branches should suddenly be clothed with what is so bright and refreshing! Yet, in God's good time, leaves come on the trees. The season may delay, but come it will at last. So it is with the coming of that Eternal Spring, for which all Christians are waiting. Come it will, though it delay; yet though it tarry, let us wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Therefore we say day by day, "Thy kingdom come;" which means, O Lord, show Thyself, manifest Thyself; Thou that sittest between the cherubims, show Thyself; stir up Thy strength, and come and help us. The earth that we see does not satisfy us; it is but a beginning; it is but a promise of something beyond it: even when it is gayest, with all its blossoms on, and shows most touchingly what lies hid in it, yet it is not enough. We know much more lies hid in it than we see. A world of saints and angels, a glorious world, the palace of God, the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the heavenly Jerusalem, the throne of God and Christ; all these wonders, everlasting, all-precious, mysterious, incomprehensible, lie hid in what we see. What we see is the outward shell of an eternal kingdom, and on that kingdom we fix the eyes of our faith. Shine forth, O Lord, as when on Thy nativity Thine angels visited the shepherds; let Thy glory blossom forth as bloom and foliage; change with Thy mighty power this visible world into that diviner world, which as yet we see not;

destroy what we see, that it may pass, and be transformed into what we believe. Bright as is the sun, and the sky, and the clouds ; green as are the leaves and the fields ; sweet as is the singing of the birds ; we know that they are not all, and we will not take up with a part for the whole. They proceed from a centre of love and goodness, which is God Himself ; but they are not His fulness ; they speak of heaven, but they are not heaven ; they are but as stray beams and dim reflections of His image ; they are but crumbs from His table. We are looking for the coming of the day of God, when all this outward world, fair though it be, shall perish ; when the heavens shall be burnt, and the earth melt away. We can bear the loss, for we know it will be but the removing of a veil. We know that to remove the world which is seen, will be the manifestation of the world which is not seen. We know that what we see is as a screen hiding from us God and Christ, and His saints and angels ; and we earnestly desire and pray for the dissolution of all that we see, from our love and longing after that which we do not see. O blessed they indeed, who are destined for a sight of those wonders in which they now stand, at which they now look, but which they do not recognise ! Blessed they who shall at length behold what as yet mortal eye hath not seen, and faith only enjoys ! Those wonderful things of the new world are even now as they shall be then. They are immortal and eternal ; and they who shall then be made conscious of them will see them in

their calmness and their majesty, where they ever have been. But who can express the surprise and rapture which will come upon those who then at least apprehend them for the first time, and to whose perceptions they are new? Who can imagine, by a stretch of fancy, the feelings of those who having died in faith, wake up to enjoyment? The life then begun, we know, will last for ever; yet surely, if memory be to us then what it is now, that will be a day much to be observed unto the Lord, through all the ages of eternity. We may increase, indeed, for ever in knowledge and in love; still that first awakening from the dead, the day at once of our birth and our espousal, will ever be endeared and hallowed in our thoughts. When we find ourselves, after long rest, gifted with fresh powers, vigorous with the seed of eternal life within us, able to love God as we wish, conscious that all trouble, sorrow, pain, anxiety, and bereavement, is over for ever; blest in the full affection of those earthly friends whom we loved so poorly, and could protect so feebly, while they were with us in the flesh; and, above all, visited with the immediate, visible, ineffable presence of God Almighty, with His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and His co-equal, co-eternal Spirit; that great sight in which is the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore! What deep incommunicable and unimaginable thoughts will be then upon us! What depths will be stirred up within us! What secret harmonies awakened, of which human nature seemed incapable! Earthly

words are indeed all worthless to minister to such high anticipations. Let us close our eyes, and keep silence.

NEWMAN.

XLVI

The world is no help-meet for man, and a help-meet he needs. No one, man or woman, can stand alone; we are so constituted by nature; and the world, instead of helping us, is an open adversary: it but increases our solitariness.

Elijah cried, "I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away."¹ How did Almighty God answer him? By graciously telling him that He had reserved to Himself a remnant of seven thousand true believers. Such is the blessed truth He brings home to us also; we may be full of sorrows; there may be fightings without, and fears within; we may be exposed to the frowns, censure, or contempt of men; we may be shunned by them, or to take the lightest case, we may be (as we certainly shall be) wearied out by the unprofitableness of this world, by its coldness and unfriendliness, distance and dreariness; we shall need something nearer to us. What is our resource? It is not in arm of man, in flesh and blood, in voice of friend, or in pleasant countenance; it is that holy name which God has given us in His Church; it is in that everlasting city in which He has fixed His abode; it is that mount invisible, where angels are

¹ 1 Kings xix. 14.

looking at us with their piercing eyes, and the voices of the dead call us.

Leave, then, this earthly scene, O virgin soul ; aim at a higher prize, a nobler companionship. Enter into the tabernacle of God. Satan may do his worst ; he may afflict thee sore ; he may wound thee, he may brand thee ; he may cripple thee as regards this world, but he cannot touch thee in things spiritual ; he has no power over thee to bring thee into God's displeasure. O virgin soul, let this be thy stay in the dark day. When thou art sick of the world, to whom shouldest thou go ? To none short of Him who is the Heavenly Spouse of every faithful soul.

Though thou art in a body of flesh, a member of this world, thou hast but to kneel down reverently in prayer, and thou art at once in the society of saints and angels. Wherever thou art, thou canst, by God's incomprehensible mercy, in a moment bring thyself into the midst of God's holy Church invisible, and receive secretly that aid, the very thought of which is a present sensible blessing. Art thou afflicted ? Thou canst pray. Art thou merry ? Thou canst sing psalms. Art thou lonely, does the day run heavily ? Fall on thy knees, and thy thoughts are at once relieved by the idea and the reality of thy unseen companions. Art thou tempted to sin ? Think steadily of those who perchance witness thy doings from God's secret dwell-

ing-place. Hast thou lost friends? Realize them by faith. Art thou slandered? Thou hast the praise of angels. Art thou under trial? Thou hast their sympathy.

NEWMAN.

XLVII

HOSEA II

In this chapter God points Himself out to us as *the Author of affliction*. He makes no attempt to conceal or disguise Himself; on the contrary, He rather forces Himself on our notice as the source of His people's troubles. It was the Assyrian army that laid Israel waste; it was the cruelty of her enemies that desolated her country, and carried her into a wretched captivity; but not a word is said in this chapter of man or his violence; the God of Israel seems determined to keep all but Himself out of our sight. "I," He says, "will take away my corn and my wine." "I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees." "I will cause all her mirth to cease." "I will visit upon her the days of Baalim." "I will bring her into the wilderness." Now, why this anxiety in a God of love to stand thus forward as the author of misery; and misery, observe, among people He loves the most? For two reasons. First, because we are so backward in affliction to discern His hand. We say, indeed, when it comes, "It is the work of God;" but we do not half believe what we say: we have no deep or lively impression of its truth. There is often

lurking within us a conviction directly opposed to it : else why that restless anxiety in trouble, to look so closely into second causes ? Why are our minds continually going over the circumstances that have led to our calamities ? Why does one of us say, " Had this been let alone, my buried friend might have been spared." And another, " Had that been done, my poor child might not have sunk." And a third, " In any other situation, my withered health might have stood firm."

There may be some truth in all this, but the incessant dwelling of our minds on it shows how we labour to push God out of our concerns ; how unwilling our sinful hearts are in all situations to acknowledge or even perceive His hand.

But He has another reason for ascribing to Himself our trials. We can get no good out of affliction, no real comfort under it, till we view it as sent to us from Him. The man of the world regards affliction as " coming forth of the dust," and trouble as " springing out of the ground." It is the necessary result, he conceives, of our present condition and circumstances ; and where is the benefit that he derives from sorrow ? It works in him no submission, it brings out of him no praise. It is when the mind discovers God at the very root of its suffering ; when it sees Him desolating its comforts, and robbing it of its joys with His own hand ; when every grave seems dug by Him, and every loss and every pang are felt to be His work ; when it cannot banish Him from its thoughts, nor disconnect with

Him one of its griefs, nor even wish to do either; it is then that the soul begins to bethink itself, and the heart to soften, and man's proud, rebellious, stubborn spirit to give way. Then the knee bends, and the prayer goes up, and the blessing comes down. Then, for the first time, we are quieted and subdued. "I was dumb," said David, "and opened not my mouth: because Thou didst it."¹ "It is the Lord," said Eli; and then that poor old parent could add, "Let Him do what seemeth Him good."² And this conviction will carry us yet farther. Only let a man once see that a Father's hand has mingled his cup of bitterness, and he will soon do more than say, "shall I not drink it?"³ His heart may be half breaking, but there is something within that heart, which, ere he is aware, will force his lips to praise. "The Lord gave," said Job, "and the Lord hath taken away;" and then comes this noble, but yet natural exclamation, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."⁴

BRADLEY.

XLVII.—(2)

JOHN XVII. 24

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

Mark where the presence of Christ is to be enjoyed. He prays that we may be with Him,

¹ Ps. xxxix. 9.³ John xviii. 11.² 1 Sam. iii. 18.⁴ Job i. 21.

“where He is.” Now in the Spirit, He is everywhere. He is God, and as God He fills all space with His existence: He must speak therefore, here, of that world wherein He manifests His presence, where He dwells in the body, where He even now lives and reigns as the glorified Son of Man. And this is to be not only with the most glorious Being in the universe, but with Him in the most glorious place; in the place which He calls His own kingdom, His own city, His own house; a world which He has built to show forth His power, to declare His greatness by its magnificence as gloriously as any material thing can declare it; so gloriously, that when we see it, we shall deem it almost worthy to be His dwelling. To be with him there, is to be with Him in a world from which all sorrow and sin are excluded, where not a single unholy feeling is ever experienced, nor a single tear shed, nor sigh breathed; where the weary soul may rest, and the troubled soul be quiet, and the tempted soul repose, and the fettered soul be free. It is to be with Him not alone, but with the highest and best society the universe can afford; with cherubim and seraphim, with the patriarchs and fathers, with apostles, and prophets, and martyrs. It is to meet again in His blissful presence the companions of our youth; the parents, and children, and friends, whom death has separated from us, or distance severed, or infirmity estranged; and to meet them where death can touch them no more, where distance can never intervene, nor passions

disturb. In a word, it is to be where the Lord Christ Himself delights to be; where He finds the materials of joy for His own wonderful soul. It is to see His face in its brightness, to hear His voice in His happiness, to sit down at His glorified feet. It is for the abased members of the body to be united to the triumphant Head: it is to meet the Bridegroom in all the radiance and joy of the bridal morning; it is to be with the incarnate Jehovah in Jehovah's own everlasting heavens.

With such a prospect before us, shall we not say one to another, Let us lift up our heads with joy amidst the troubles of an evil world? We are to sojourn in Mesek but a little longer; we are soon to take our leave for ever of the tents of Kedar; we are already within the distant rays of that glory which is our sure inheritance; and can the light afflictions of the present time have more power to depress, than that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"¹ has to elevate and gladden us? Oh, no! Our concern shall be to feel and act like men who are going to a happy and holy Saviour, in a holy and happy world. We will labour to have "our conversation in heaven;"² to catch something of its spirit before we enter into its joy.

BRADLEY.

10. The experience and possession of divine pity is better than bodily ease, freedom from trouble, or the greatest worldly prosperity.

T. ADAM.

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

² Phil. iii. 20.

XLVIII

Preparation for higher degrees of glory is likewise wrought by the grace of God, through the agency of suffering, and should much reconcile us to the cup. Grace in our hearts is indeed created, planted, and watered, by the hand and Spirit of the living God; but it is also strengthened to perfection under His power, by the exercise of affliction. Doubt not but that the highest who will ascend to glory above, will be found to be among those who not only have washed their hearts in the Redeemer's blood,—(this is the title to all salvation,)—but who also have been tried in the refining fires of affliction more severely than others. Affliction is a school, under the blessing of God, to ripen us for an exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and vain as is the common imagination, that those who are tried here are saved from all sorrow hereafter, be they united to Christ or not; it is yet a true doctrine, that as there are degrees of glory, so the most severely afflicted ones, who are also believers in Jesus, will shine the brightest in that glory; not so much because of their suffering, as of the grace wrought to purification in their souls by the Spirit of God, through the agency of suffering.

Take courage, therefore, any amongst you, beloved, who are the sons and daughters of tribulation; if united to Jesus by a living faith, you are training, through your very afflictions, for superior

glory. The clouds that now darken your horizon will soon disappear before the brightness of the sun, and your spirit of heaviness shall be exchanged for the garments of joy. Be resting on Jésus for all your strength, hope, and deliverance. Believe in Him as your pattern, as well as your support in every tribulation. Ask of Him in every fresh trial, and under every circumstance of the trial, Lord, how wouldest Thou have me to act? What wouldest Thou have me to do? Beg of Him increasing submission, and thankfulness of spirit. Endeavour to obtain that transcendency of faith which sustains the soul above the depression of this low world, and the wearying contemplation of pain, sorrow, fear, sin, and death; and strive to raise your senses and affections to things above, where your compassionate Saviour dwells, and whence He will soon return to gather you up with Him to His throne, that you may behold His glory. Seek of Him the Holy Spirit to intercede within you, and to unite your heart to God's heart. He is a counsellor and comforter from Christ to His distressed ones. He is a guide to lead you into all truth, to reveal to you the whole will of your Heavenly Father, and to work mightily the power of God in your soul; quickening you from sin to holiness, and raising you up to all heavenly blessings with Christ.

And suffer not the wicked one to tempt you with doubts, fears, unbelief; these evils come from beneath; from above is faith, joy, and hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Be assured, if in-

deed you are Christ's flock, that all shall be well with you; for all things shall work together for good to them that love God;"¹ and He who has showed you great and sore troubles shall quicken you again, and bring you up again from the depths of the earth; He shall increase your greatness, and comfort you on every side."² Meanwhile, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee," saith the Lord; "be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."³

P. W. DOUGLAS.

XLIX

"For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."⁴

Such is the lesson which the Holy Spirit conveys to the suffering members of Christ's body, through one whose first admission to the Christian faith was marked by this testimony of the Lord Himself: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."⁵ And as we follow the course of this great Apostle, we find that he was ever conformed to the pattern of his Master, the "Man of sorrows."⁶ Whatever he was ignorant of in the future, this one truth was deeply settled in his soul: "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, that

¹ Rom. viii. 28.

² Ps. lxxi. 20, 21.

³ Isa. xli. 10.

⁴ Heb. x. 36.

⁵ Acts ix. 16.

⁶ Isa. liii. 3.

bonds and afflictions abide me.”¹ He had counted the cost, and was contented to win Christ, while he suffered the loss of all things ; and to such a high degree was the strength of his Lord perfected in his weakness, that he could even “glory in tribulation;”² he could welcome and embrace it as a precious gift from heaven, a distinguishing mark of Christ’s favour, to be counted worthy to suffer for His sake.

The same grace of patient endurance, of thankful, rejoicing acquiescence in the severer discipline of our Heavenly Father’s will, has shone forth in the saints of every age. Circumstances, may vary, and the trials of different periods of the Church, as well as of its different members, may be diverse ; but still it stands an unalterable law of our militant condition : “In the world ye shall have tribulation.”³

Like Israel in the wilderness, we “are not yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord our God giveth us.”⁴ “And there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons, than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses : for He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain ; He entered not into His glory before He was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ ; and our door to enter into eternal life, is gladly to die with Christ, that we may rise again

¹ Acts xx. 23.

³ John xvi. 33.

² Rom. v. 3.

⁴ Deut. xii. 9.

from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life.”¹ Now, we sow in tears ; the time will come when we shall reap in joy.

1. If we would attain the grace of patience under suffering, let us seek first to cultivate *a deep sense of our own sinfulness*. “Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?”² “Know this, that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.”³ A true sight of the corruption of our nature, a conviction of our innumerable departures from God, our quenching of His Holy Spirit, our insensibility to His love, our earthliness and vanity ; the wide extent of evil in heart and life, in word and deed, which a faithful self-examination presents to us ; all this should make us rather wonder that God so lightly afflicts us, and that the rod of His displeasure does not most severely visit His wayward and disobedient children.

2. Let us consider the *purpose* of God in afflicting us. “By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.”⁴ God knows that without holiness, we can have no true happiness : that our hearts can find no rest till they are drawn upwards, and centred in Him ; and therefore He appoints us a continual process of purification and refining. Sometimes there is the furnace of exceeding sharp affliction ; long continued bodily suffering ; days and nights, and months and years, of weariness and anguish : the desire of

¹ Office of “Visitation of the Sick.”

³ Job xi. 6.

² Lam. iii. 39.

⁴ Isa. xxvii. 9.

our eyes taken away with a stroke ; then the inward cross of mental trial, the felt burden of indwelling corruption, the thorn in the flesh, the assaults of Satan, and all the various ills and vexations, trials and disappointments, of this mortal state. Yet all this is to be welcomed as *blessing* ; yea, it is to be "counted all joy" by the heart that knows its God. Every step of sanctified suffering is a step nearer to the crown of glory. It is a lesson learned in that school of obedience, in which as man our blessed Lord Himself was perfected ; it is an increased conformity to the meek and patient Lamb of God ; it is a precious medicine from the unerring Physician of our souls : it is a token of our Heavenly Father's special love, refining from dross, and polishing from corruption, the blood-bought jewels of His grace. God is putting to the test (it may be of fiery trial) the faith which He Himself has given ; thus grace is strengthened and exercised, and the stone is "made ready" for its place in the heavenly temple.

3. Let us habitually contemplate the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Light, indeed, ought every trial of ours to appear, when we think of Him who could say, "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?"¹ In what woe or pain, whether of body or mind, can we not find in our faithful High Priest the sympathy of an *infinite* sufferer? And all this for our sakes! O my Saviour, let me be dumb like Thee, and never open my mouth in complaining, whatever be the bitter cup Thou givest

¹ Lam. i. 12.

me to drink ; for it can only be a cup of blessing to Thy redeemed child, for whom Thou hast borne the curse, and exhausted the cup of wrath and indignation. Let me not shrink from any fellowship with Thee in suffering, who for me didst "endure the cross, despising the shame,"¹ and art now preparing for me joys which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."²

4. Let us dwell much on the love and mercy of God, exhibited towards us in redemption. While we do this, we cannot be greatly moved by the sufferings of time. God has not spared His own Son for me. Shall I then think that He deals hardly in taking away any creature of earth, or in depriving me of any gourd in whose shelter I was glad ? He has granted me spiritual healing ; shall I complain of bodily pain ? He has given me the Holy Ghost the Comforter ; shall I mourn over the withered joys of earth ? He has given me the bright hope of an everlasting home in glory ; shall I count it hard to be a pilgrim and a stranger during a few short days or years in this thorny wilderness ? No ; rather let my heart be soaring upwards to the source of its hidden life, in adoring gratitude to the God of my salvation, who pitied me in my low estate ; "for His mercy endureth for ever !"

5. Let us live in a spirit of prayer. Suffering times have ever been praying times with the saints of God. "In my distress I cried unto the Lord,

¹ Heb. xii. 2.

² 1 Cor. ii. 9.

and He heard me,"¹ said the Psalmist. Hezekiah in his sickness "prayed and wept sore."² Our blessed Saviour, "being in agony, prayed more earnestly."³ There is the relief of utterance in pouring out our complaint before God. There is the consolation of feeling that we are not alone in our sorrows. Man may grow weary of us, but not so our sympathizing Lord. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and His ear is ever open to our cry. Ejaculatory prayer is a blessed remedy against sudden temptations to impatience: it lifts the soul above its actual condition; it lays hold on the strength of the Everlasting, brings us into communion with Him who is our peace, and calms the troubled spirit. Especially should we seek the grace of patience and long-suffering as a fruit of the Holy Ghost, for it is not a fruit that grows on nature's branch. The flesh is all impatience and discontent, and can only be subdued to the spirit by the mighty power of God.

6. Let us beware of looking on any trial with the eye of sense. Faith in the midst of suffering is like the tree cast into the bitter waters of Marah, which made them sweet. But sense only adds fuel to the flame of impatience. God is present with the soul when faith is in exercise: it is left to its own utter weakness when sight prevails. Faith is content that God should order and appoint every event and circumstance: sense would blindly dictate to Him, and choose a path of ease and self-indulgence.

¹ Ps. cxx. 1.

² 1 Kings xx. 2, 3.

³ Luke xxii. 44.

7. Let us consider the shortness of time, and dwell deeply on the thought of eternity and of the coming of Christ. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."¹ Then will He give rest to the weary, and consolation to the sorrowful. Their peace shall be as a river, ever flowing; they shall have entered into "the joy of their Lord,"² a joy that fears no vicissitude. Their sun shall never more go down, nor shall the passing shadow of a cloud obscure the bright shining of its rays.

And let us remember, that even now God foreknows the weight and duration of our trials. He sees the end from the beginning, and the happy issue out of all our afflictions which He has in store for us. It may be very, *very* soon, "O thou afflicted with tempest, and not comforted! that He will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires."³ "Thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away."⁴ Surely there is an *end*, may be said of everything, save of the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Suffering seems long and weary, and for the present grievous; yet it is but a little moment, a twinkling of an eye, compared with the everlasting inheritance of the saints in light, when the days of their mourning shall be ended. "When there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things

¹ Heb. x. 37.

³ Isa. liv. 11.

² Matt. xxv. 21.

⁴ Job x. 1, 16.

are passed away.”¹ “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.”² “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”³

ANON.

11. In affliction, see the necessity of it, and be humbled ; see the use of it, and improve it ; see the love there is in it, and be thankful. I know of no greater blessing than health, except pain and sickness.

T. ADAM.

L

You who are sufferers, whether from sickness, or sorrow, or sin ; and patient sufferers for the Lord's sake, He says to each of you, “I know how thou hast borne, *i.e.* suffered, and hast patience, and for my sake hast laboured, and not fainted.” (Rev. ii. 3.) Your Lord has known many a secret trial, many an hour of sorrow and affliction, through which you have passed, and which the world has never known. Your Lord has seen your domestic difficulties, your personal troubles, your moments of secret anguish, perhaps unrevealed even to your dearest friend ; for there are sorrows which ought not and cannot be communicated, but to God alone ; and yet you have not fainted, but persevered ; and for His name's sake hast patience. Of all these He says, in the language of commendation, “I know” them ; I know your every prayer

¹ Rev. xxi. 4.

² Job xiv. 14.

³ Rom. viii. 18.

for guidance, your every effort to bear patiently and contentedly what I have laid upon you, and to profit by the visitation ; to hear the rod, and Him who appointed it ; 'your every endeavour against evil tempers and evil habits. All these things, which man can never know, are known and valued by me. How delightful is the reflection to the child of God, that we have to do with One who judges not as sinners judge, and who feels not as even the holiest friend on earth can feel towards our patient endurance, our shortenings, or our slow advancements, but who looks even at the most feeble as children still ; and while those around may blame us that we have borne our trials no better, and have advanced no further and no faster on the heavenward road, He, that merciful Redeemer, commends us, that we are still upon the road, and "have not fainted."

H. BLUNT.

LI

I PET. IV. 12, 13

"Think it not strange," for it is not. Suit your thought to the experience and verdict of all times, and to the warnings that the Spirit of God hath given us in the Scriptures, and our Saviour Himself from His own mouth, and in the example which He showed in His own person. But the point goes higher.

"Rejoice." Though we think not the sufferings "strange," yet may we not well think that rule somewhat strange, to rejoice in them? No ; it will

be found as reasonable as the other, being duly considered ; and it rests upon the same ground which will bear both, "Inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ."

So, then, 1. Consider this twofold connected participation of the sufferings of Christ, and of the afterglory. 2. The present joy, even in sufferings, springing from that participation.

I need not tell you that this communion in sufferings is not in point of expiation, or satisfaction to Divine justice ; which was the peculiar end of the sufferings of Christ personal, but not of the common sufferings of Christ mystical. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree ;"¹ and in bearing them, took them away : we bear His sufferings, as His body united to Him by His Spirit. Those sufferings which were His personal burden we partake the sweet fruits of it ; they are accounted ours, and we are acquitted by them : but the endurance of them was His high and incommunicable task, in which none at all were with Him. Our communion in these, as fully completed by Himself in His natural body, is the ground of our comfort and joy in those sufferings that are completed in His mystical body, the Church.

This is indeed our joy, that we have so light a burden, so sweet an exchange ; the weight of sin quite taken off our backs, and all bound on His cross only ; and our crosses, the badges of our conformity to Him, laid indeed on our shoulders, but

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

the great weight of them likewise held up by His hand, that they overpress us not. These fires of our trial may be corrective, and purgative of the remaining power of sin, and they are so intended ; but Jesus Christ alone, in the sufferings of His own cross, was the burnt-offering, " the propitiation for our sins."

Now, although He hath perfectly satisfied for us, and saved us by His sufferings, yet this conformity to Him in the way of suffering is most reasonable. Although our holiness doth not stand in point of law, nor come in at all in the matter of justifying us, yet we are called and appointed to holiness in Christ, as assimilating us to Him, our glorious Head ; and we do really receive it from Him, that we may be like Him. So these our sufferings bear a very congruous likeness to Him, though in no way as an accession to His in expiation, yet, as a part of His image ; and therefore the Apostle says, even in this respect, that we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son." (Rom. viii. 29.)

Is it fit that we should not follow where our Captain led, and went first, but that He should lead through rugged, thorny ways, and we pass about to get a way through flowery meadows ? As His natural body shared with His head in His sufferings, so ought His body mystical to share with Him, as its head, the buffetings and spittings on His face, the thorny crown on His head, a pierced side, nailed hands and feet. If we be parts of

Him, can we think that a body finding nothing but ease, and bathing in delight, can agree to a Head so tormented? I remember what that pious duke said at Jerusalem, when they offered to crown him king there, "*Nolo auream, ubi Christus spineam.*" "No crown of gold, where Jesus was crowned with thorns."

This is the way we must follow, or else resolve to leave Him; the way of the cross is the royal way to the crown. He said it, and reminded them of it again, that they might take the deep impression of it: "Remember what I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." (John xv. 20.) And particularly in point of reproaches: "If they have called the master Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Matt. x. 25.) A bitter scoff, an evil name, reproaches for Christ, why do these fret thee? They were a part of thy Lord's entertainment while He was here. Thou art even in this a "partaker of His sufferings," and in this way He is bringing thee forward to the partaking of His glory. That is the other thing.

"When His glory shall be revealed." Now that He is hidden, little of His glory is seen. It was hidden while He was on earth, and now it is hidden in heaven, where He is; and as for His body here, His Church, it hath no pompous dress, nor outward splendour; and the particular parts of it, the

saints, are poor despised creatures, the very refuse of men in outward respects and common esteem. So He Himself is not seen ; and His followers, the more they are seen and looked on by the world's eye, the more their meanness appears. True, as in the days of His humiliation, some rays were breaking forth through the veil of His flesh and the cloud of His low despicable condition ; thus it is sometimes with His followers : a glance of His image strikes the very eye of the world, and forces some acknowledgment and a kind of reverence in the ungodly ; but commonly Christ and His followers are covered with all the disgraces and ignominies the world can put on them. But there is a day wherein He will appear, and it is at hand ; and "He shall be glorious, even in His despised saints," and "admired in them that believe." (2 Thess. i. 10.) How much more in the brightness of His own glorious person !

In the meantime, He is hidden, and they are hidden in Him. "Our life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) The world sees nothing of His glory and beauty, and even His own see not much ; they have but a little glimmering of Him, and of their own happiness in Him ; know little of their own high condition, and what they are born to. But in that bright day, He shall shine forth in His royal dignity, and "every eye shall see Him,"¹ and be overcome with His splendour. Terrible shall it be to those that formerly despised

¹ Rev. i. 7.

Him and His saints, but to them it shall be the gladdest day that ever arose upon them, a day that shall never set or be benighted ; the day they so much longed and looked out for, the full accomplishment of all their hopes and desires. Oh, how dark were all our days without the hope of this day !

“Then,” says the Apostle, “ye shall rejoice with exceeding joy ;”¹ and to the end you may not fall short of that joy in the participation of glory, fall not back from a cheerful progress in the communion of those sufferings that are so closely linked with it, and will so surely lead unto it, and end in it : for in this the Apostle’s expression, this glory and joy is set before them as the great matter of their desires and hopes, and the certain end of their present sufferings.

Now, upon these grounds, the admonition will appear reasonable, and not too great a demand “to rejoice” even in “sufferings.”

It is true that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 11, opposes present affliction to joy. But, 1. If you mark, it is but in the appearance, or outward visage. It seemeth not to be matter of joy, but of grief. To look upon, it hath not a smiling countenance ; yet joy may be under it. And, 2. Though to the flesh it is what it seems—grief, and not joy—yet there may be under it spiritual joy ; yea, the affliction itself may help and advance that joy. 3. Through the natural sense of it, there will be some alloy or mixture

¹ 1 Pet. iv. 13.

of grief, so that the joy cannot be pure and complete, but yet there may be joy even in it. This, the Apostle here clearly grants: "Rejoice" now "in" suffering, that you may "rejoice exceedingly after" it, "leaping for joy." Doubtless, this joy at present is but a little parcel, a drop of that sea of joy. Now it is joy, but more is reserved. Then they shall leap for joy. Yet even at present rejoice in "trial," yea, in "fiery trial." This may be done. The children of God are not called to so sad a life as the world imagines: besides what is laid up for them in heaven, they have, even here, their rejoicings and songs in their distresses, as those prisoners had their psalms even at midnight, after their stripes, and in their chains, before they knew of a sudden deliverance. (Acts xvi. 25.) True, there may be a darkness within, clouding all the matter of their joy: but even that darkness is the seed-time of after-joy: light is sown in that darkness, and shall spring up; and not only shall they have a rich crop at full harvest, but even some first fruits of it here, in pledge of the harvest.

And this they ought to expect, and to seek after, with minds humble and submissive, as to the measure and time of it, that they may be partakers of spiritual joy, and may by it be enabled to go patiently, yea, cheerfully, through the tribulations and temptations that lie in their way homeward: and for this end they ought to endeavour after a more clear discerning of their interest in Christ, that they may know they partake of Him; and so, that in suffer-

ing they are partakers of His sufferings, and shall be partakers of His glory.

Many afflictions will not cloud and obstruct this, so much as one sin; therefore, if ye would walk cheerfully, be most careful to walk holily. All the winds about the earth make not an earthquake, but only that within.

Now, this joy is grounded on this communion, 1. in sufferings; then, 2. in glory.

1. Even in sufferings themselves. It is a sweet, a joyful thing, to be a sharer with Christ in *anything*. All enjoyments wherein He is not, are bitter to a soul that loves Him, and all sufferings with Him are sweet. The worst things of Christ are more truly delightful than the best things of the world; His afflictions are sweeter than their pleasures, His "reproach" more glorious than their honours, and more rich than their treasures, as Moses accounted them. (Heb. xi. 26.) Love delights in likeness and communion, not only in things otherwise pleasant, but in the hardest and harshest things, which have not anything in them desirable, but only that likeness. So that this thought is very sweet to a heart possessed with this love. What does the world by its hatred and persecutions, and revilings for the sake of Christ, but make me more like Him, give me a greater share with Him in that which He did so willingly undergo for me? "When He was sought for to be made a king," as St. Bernard remarks, "He escaped; but when He was to be brought to the cross, He freely yielded Himself." And shall

I shrink and creep back from what He calls me to suffer for His sake? Yea, even all my other troubles and sufferings I will desire to have stamped thus, with this conformity to the sufferings of Christ, in the humble, obedient, cheerful endurance of them, and the giving up my will to my Father's.

The following of Christ makes any way pleasant. His faithful followers refuse no march after Him, be it through deserts, and mountains, and storms, and hazards, that will affright self-pleasing easy spirits. Hearts kindled and actuated with the Spirit of Christ will "follow Him wheresoever He goeth."¹

As He speaks it for warning to His disciples, "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you;" so He speaks it for comfort to them, and sufficient comfort it is, "If they hate you, they hated me before you."²

2. Then add the other: see whither it tends. "He shall be revealed in His glory," and ye shall even overflow with joy in the partaking of that glory: therefore rejoice now in the midst of all your sufferings. Stand upon the advanced ground of the promises and the covenant of grace, and by faith look beyond this moment, and all that is in it, to that day wherein "everlasting joy shall be upon your heads," a crown of it, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.³ Believe in this day, and the victory is won. Oh! that blessed hope, well fixed and exercised, would give other manner of spirits.

¹ Rev. xiv. 4.

² John xv. 18-20.

³ Isa. li. 11.

What zeal of God would it not inspire ! What invincible courage against all encounters ! How soon will this pageant of the world vanish that men are gazing on,—these pictures, and fancies of pleasures and honours, falsely so called,—and give place to the real glory of the sons of God, when this blessed Son who is God, shall be seen appearing in full majesty, and all His brethren in glory with Him, all clothed in their robes ! And if you ask, Who are they ? Why, “these are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.”¹

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

12. It is easy to say; Blessed be God in everything ; but where is the man that is always pleased with God ?

T. ADAM.

LII

“In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be” not only an High Priest, but “an High Priest *merciful and faithful*.”² Here we see the care and tenderness of God. Whom do we so readily trust as one whom we know to be able to enter into our condition ? Who is best fitted to comfort mourners ? He who has mourned himself. Who can best tell the dangers of prosperity ? He who has prospered himself. Who can tell us what sickness is ? He

¹ Rev. vii. 14.

² Heb. ii. 17.

whose head has often throbbed with pain. It is so throughout ; and we never can tell exactly what human sufferings and human sorrows are, until we have ourselves suffered and wept. It is on this account that different classes of men do not exactly understand and trust each other. The poor man thinks that the rich man cannot quite tell what the pinch of poverty is ; and the rich man, that his poor neighbour does not know the thorns that are in his downy pillow, or the bitters that are in his golden cup. To meet this human want, Jesus became our brother ; He took on Him our nature, and with it all its feelings and all its frailties ; and thus it is that now, every one, of whatever class and condition, can look to Him with confidence. The poor can look to Him, for He was emphatically a poor man ; the rich, for He wore the nature which the rich man wears. The young can look to Him, for He was once young : He lay in a mother's bosom, He trod a nursery floor, He was subject to a father's authority. The full-grown man can look to Him, for He felt the sorrows which the full-grown man must sooner or later feel. With the dying He can sympathize, for He bowed His own sacred head, in the hour of darkness, before the power of death.

He is thus "a merciful," or (as it may be translated) a "pitiful High Priest." He feels for those for whom He intercedes. When we come to Him in weakness and weariness, our bodies oppressed by disease, our minds weighed down by care, we

come to One who has Himself felt oppression of body and weariness of mind, and we know that He pities us—for *He* cannot forget—man *may* forget, and it often happens that he who has been in a low estate will lose the memory of the trials he then experienced ; and should he be advanced higher will trample unfeelingly upon those who were once his equals. It is not so with Jesus ! He is “faithful and true,” as well as “merciful and pitiful.” He remembers what human weakness is ; He recalls it when the mourner is before Him : He looks upon his beating heart, upon his tearful eye, upon his pale cheek, upon his anxious brow, and He seems to say, “I once wept, I once was pale, I once was sorrowful ; O, my Father, have compassion on this poor suppliant, as Thou once in the days of my flesh hadst compassion on me !” Verily, He is a merciful, a pitiful High Priest ! Verily, “He knoweth our frame” by personal experience ; “He remembereth that we are dust !”¹

But, again, He is said to be “faithful.” His faithfulness consists in His earnest and constant intercession for His brethren ; He pleads as for His own flesh and blood ; He does not forget that He was Himself a man. Perhaps we may thus illustrate this part of His character. If a man make a promise while he is in a certain situation, as long as he remains in that situation he will be likely to remember it ; many things will call it to his mind : but if his situation be changed,—if he

¹ Ps. ciii. 14.

go to other places, form other connexions, or enter into other pursuits, he is too apt to forget the past, and its feelings and its promises. Now Jesus is ever the same. His heart is unchanged—unchangeable : He is passed into the heavens, but He is still the God-man, the God incarnate, and still feels in perfect sympathy and brotherhood with man.

What solid comfort does this consideration afford us. The atoning sacrifice was made eighteen hundred years ago, but the Victim is still fresh before the throne ; the Lamb lies bleeding on the altar ; the blood still seems to flow ; the High Priest still and for ever offers the Eternal Sacrifice : He is pitiful and faithful !—in glory, but not forgetful of His shame ; in heaven, but not unmindful of earth ; in company with God His Father, but bearing upon the palms of His hands, upon His jewelled breast-plate, and upon His swelling heart, the names and the memories of His own ransomed brethren.

KENNAWAY.

LIII

If such a single sincere spirit be in you, it comes of God ; it is a sign of the seal of the Holy One setting you apart to eternal life ; it is a proof of the operation of the grace of Christ in your heart ; of your being a child of God, as led by His Spirit. If, then, rooted and grounded in Christ by godly repentance and self-abasement for your sins, and earnest reliance of belief on His sacrifice for your reconciliation with God ; if in this spirit of faith

and of love you are patiently walking with Him in singleness and sincerity of heart, be comforted with the assurance that you are of that number whom He is pleased to call pure in heart, and in whom, as in a temple, He promises to dwell.

And then, what shall be your recompense of reward hereafter? Hear the word of the Lord of all grace: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."¹ The revelation of God in glory, Father, Son, and Spirit; and the admission perpetual into the unclouded presence of His love, joy, and praise, are the exceeding high reward held out to all those who are purified in heart; a proof how transcendently excellent the most blessed God must be, since even to behold Him is the consummation of the happiness of His beloved people. The revelation of God is the most sublime enjoyment that the soul of man, intelligent and immortal as it is, refined and sanctified as by grace it may be, is yet capable of. The least and faintest glimpses which here we taste of Him are the most sweet, the most sacred, the most elevated delight we know; in Him is the fountain of life; but hereafter the pure in heart shall behold Him face to face; they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house, and made to drink of the rivers of His heavenly pleasures.

And shall they indeed see God? Shall mortal man stand upright before his Maker? Then shall they see Him who no longer opposes the blank of

¹ Matt. v. 8.

His offended justice and His terrible holiness before their unrighteousness, and ascends in the majesty of a judge ; but they shall see Him as a father, a reconciled father, who embraces them in the arms of His mercy, who abhors not to call them, and comfort them as sons, who has gathered them beneath the wings of His parental love, through the intercession of His divine Son,—and who freely sacrificed that Son to the vengeance of the cross, in order to exalt them into the presence of His glory!

Shall they see God? Then shall they behold that Saviour who is God, even as the Father is God, but who emptied Himself of all His glory, and became man, for their redemption. Then shall they see that loving and lowly Shepherd, who laboured, wrought, wept, agonized, for their sakes; who bared the breast of His compassion to the full fury of the storm of Almighty wrath,—wrath and anguish unutterable; compounded of the judgment of heaven, the ingratitude of earth, and the fiercest malice of hell; wrath that terminated in the extinction of His life, and the shedding of His blood on the accursed cross. Moreover, that loving Saviour, who ceased not His compassions with His mortal life, but who lives again and for evermore, specially to appear and advocate their cause in the presence of the Father; specially also to hear and answer their supplications, to receive and dispense His spirit of grace, to exercise the government of heaven and earth for their preservation, and to prepare for them mansions of divine rest. This Saviour whom, here

below, without seeing, they loved and rejoiced in with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the pure in heart shall behold on His heavenly throne, encompassed with His armies of angels, and shining above the sun in brightness.

And shall they see God? Neither then shall they be without the sight of that Blessed Comforter and Counsellor, even the Holy Ghost, who led, and taught, and guided them; who bore with all their rebellion and perverseness; who dwelt within their souls, shedding abroad His light and life, His peace and holiness, to their sanctification; and whose mighty power has raised their mortal bodies to incorruption and immortality.

Shall they, I ask once more, see God? Oh, then! they shall be like Him too. The beloved disciple instructs us concerning this: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is:"¹ and the Psalmist: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness."² Then shall be brought to pass that most gracious desire of our Lord, that His own should be altogether united, and should be one with Him even as He is with the Father; and when His will that those whom the Father has given Him may be with Him where He is, to behold His glory, shall be fulfilled, to His eternal praise.

In that day God, in all the glory of His Person, Father, Son, and Spirit; God in all the glory of His perfections, wisdom, righteousness, faithfulness, loving-kindness; God, in His unclouded glory of

¹ John iii. 2.

² Ps. xvii. 15.

love, light, and life ; shall be revealed to the admiring, adoring eyes of His chosen and beloved ones. Shall we *see* God? O, brethren ! do we *desire* to see Him? Well, then, may we inquire: Lord, who shall dwell in thy holy hill?—who shall ascend to the throne of thy majesty? The Scripture answers, “The pure in heart shall see God.” Then let us seek the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit, so to cleanse and purify our hearts by faith as to entitle us to that most blessed sight, and that high and holy habitation; and to make us one with God, even as He is one with Christ.

P. W. DOUGLAS.

13. Real heartfelt submission to the will of God, in pain, sickness, crosses, everything, never was the work of a man's own spirit ; and when it comes from above, in answer to prayer, is full amends for all we can suffer.

T. ADAM.

LIV

“I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Even so, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours.”¹ Not as the heretics of old vainly and coldly dreamed, as if they slept without thought, or stir of consciousness, from the hour of death to the morning of the resurrection. Their rest is not the rest of a stone, cold and lifeless, but of wearied humanity. They rest from

¹ Rev. xiv. 13.

their labours ; they have no more persecution, nor stoning, nor scourging, nor crucifying ; no more martyrdoms by fire, or the wheel, or barbed shafts ; they have no more false witnesses, nor cutting tongues ; no more bitterness of heart, nor iron entering into the soul ; no more burdens of wrong, nor amazement, nor perplexity. Never again shall they weep for unkindness, and disappointment, and withered hopes, and desolation of heart. All is over now ; they have passed under the share. "The ploughers ploughed upon their back ; and made long furrows ;"¹ but it is all over, never to begin again. They rest, too, from the weight of "the body of our humiliation,"—from its sufferings and pains. Their last sickness is over ; they shall never again bear the tokens of coming dissolution ; no more the hollow eye, and the sharp lines of distress, and the hue of a fading loveliness. Now is their weariness changed into refreshment : their weakness into excellence of strength ; their wasting into a spirit ever new ; their broken words into the perfection of praise ; their weeping into a chant of bliss. And not only so, but they rest also from their warfare against sin, against all its strength, and subtleties, and snares. Satan can tempt no more ; the world cannot lure ; self cannot betray ; they have wrestled out the strife with the unseen powers of the wicked one, and they have won the mastery. There is no more inward struggle, no sliding back again, no swerving aside, no danger of falling ; they

¹ Ps. cxxix. 3.

have gained the shore of eternal peace. Above all, they rest from the sufferings of evil in themselves. It is not persecution, nor oppression, nor the rage of Satan, nor the thronging assaults of temptation, that so afflicts a holy man, as the consciousness that evil dwells in his own inmost soul. It is the clinging power of spiritual evil that sullies his whole being ; it seems to run through him in every part ; it cleaves to every movement of his life ; his living powers are hindered and biassed by its grasp. Evil tempers in sudden flashes ; unholy thoughts shooting across the soul, kindling fires in the imagination ; thoughts of self in holiest seasons ; consciousness of self in holiest acts ; indevoutness of spirit ; earthliness of heart ; dull musing heaviness in the life of God : all these burden the highest saint with a most oppressive weight. He feels always the stretch and tension of his spiritual frame, as a man that is weary and breathless, grappling with a foe, whom, if he would live, he must hold powerless to the earth. But from all this, too, they rest. The sin that dwelt in them died when through death they began to live. The unimpeded soul puts forth its new-born life, as a tree in a kindly soil invited by a gentle sky ; all that checked it has passed away ; all that draws it into ripeness bathes it with fostering power. Then at last shall the bride hear the bridegroom's voice, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away ; for lo ! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone."¹ The

¹ Song of Sol. ii. 10, 11.

Refiner shall perfect his work upon them, cleansing them sevenfold, even as gold is sometimes tried, and all the taints and bias of their spiritual being shall be detached and corrected ; till, by direct and intense vision,—not as now in a glass darkly, but then face to face,—shall they become pure even as He is pure. Hidden as is the condition of their sleep, may we not believe that they remember us ? How much of all that they were must they forfeit, if they lose both memory and love ! Shall we think that we can remember Bethel, and Gibeon, and the Valley of Ajalon, and Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives ; but that Jacob, and Joshua, and David, and the beloved disciple, remember them not ? Or shall the lifeless dust that their feet stood upon be remembered, and the living spirits above, that dwelt with them, be clean forgotten ? May we not think that they who live unto God, live in the unfolded sameness of personal identity, replenished with charity, and filled with a holy light ? They reach backwards in spirit into their world of warfare, and onward in blissful expectation to the day of Christ's coming ; and in that holy waiting they adore, as the brightness of paradise ever waxes unto the perfect day, when the noontide of God's kingdom "shall be as the light of seven days," and shall stand for ever in a meridian splendour. He hath made His rest to be "glorious ;" and there is He gathering in His jewels. There is the multitude of saints waiting and worshipping ; Abel is there, and Isaiah, and Rachel

who would not be comforted, and the sonless widow, and Mary Magdalene, and all martyrs, and all the holy ones of God. They wore out with patience the years of this toilsome life, and they are resting now ; they "sleep in Jesus." Theirs is a bliss only less perfect than the glory of His kingdom, when the new creation shall be accomplished.

MANNING.

LV

Let us understand what that cross is of which all must be partakers ; not the visible material cross, but that which is more real than the reality of fleshly crucifixion. It is not so much by sufferings in the body as in the spirit, that we are likened to Him. The railing thief was more nearly conformed to His visible passion than all, save one or two, in all the multitude of saints. Yet, though conformed to Him in the flesh, he was not likened to Him in the spirit. St. John and the blessed Virgin did not suffer indeed in the flesh, yet were they truly nailed with Him upon His cross. So in all ages of the Church, kings and princes, no less than bishops and pastors of His flock, not only in sackcloth and solitude, but in soft clothing and in the throng of royal courts, have borne the marks of the Lord Jesus, and shared the reality of His passion. Weak women too, moving in silence, and a veil, unseen of the world, and never breathed on by its rough oppositions, have both carried their cross with Him, and on it hung

beside Him : they have died with Him in will, and in sacrifice of self ; in mortifying the choices and affections of their earthlier nature ; in a glad forsaking of bright hopes and fair promises in life, sitting at His feet without distraction, and bearing withal a burden of many sorrows, partly the awful tokens of their Master's love, and partly laid upon them by the wrong and enmity of the world. Among many samples, let this one suffice. We read in the life of one, to whom was meted out a death-sickness of uncommon anguish, that as she drew near the end, for a long season she was uncheered by the divine consolations which were the wonted stay of her soul. She complained in sadness to her spiritual guide of this strange and appalling desolation, until she learned to seek in it the gift of a higher conformity to Him, who in His last passion cried aloud, " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? " ¹ In like manner there is many a sorrow fearfully hidden from the world's hard gaze, many an overlooked affliction, many a piercing of hearts by the lesser sharpnesses of our common griefs, which not the less, when borne in silence for God, makes the mourning spirit to partake of His mysterious cross. MANNING.

14. God's design is to bring us happily to Himself in another world, and He will leave no means unessayed for this purpose. If we have the same end in view, and look up to Him as carrying it on

¹ Matt. xxvii. 46.

steadily for us, we may be happy both here and hereafter ; if we have not, the consequence must necessarily be despondency, vexation, and fretfulness at the ways of Providence. T. ADAM.

LVI

The state of heart in which alone salvation consists, and on which alone the favour and blessing of God can rest, is a turning from the flesh, and a returning to God, and a trusting in Him as the true rest, and life, and direction of our souls. It is the condition of a heart, which, rejecting all other confidence than God, commits itself unreservedly to His hands, that its purpose in its creation and redemption may be fully accomplished, and which makes this surrender of itself to Him, in the full knowledge both of its own sinfulness and liability to punishment, and of His determination to punish sin, and to slay the flesh which has been tainted by sin. Such a confidence, it is evident, can only have place in a heart, which, believing that it is the loving desire and purpose of God to make it blessed by making it holy, enters fully into that purpose, and gives itself into His hands for that end, in the expectation of sorrow and death : as a man afflicted with some dreadful disease might put himself into the hands of a surgeon of whose skill he is assured, and who has said to him, " I will answer for your cure even now, if you will give yourself up unreservedly to my treatment." T. ERSKINE.

LVII

The Mediatorship of Christ is a precious doctrine. The Kingdom is in His hands, and we are privileged to receive nothing but as it passes through His hands, and bears His stamp. He is Himself the Father's unspeakable gift to us ; and now everything that comes to us comes to us through Him ; and in its passage through His hands it becomes impregnated and saturated with that very love which first gave Him to us, and constituted Him a Mediator, and nailed Him to the cross ; and with all the holiness to. So let us call nothing common or unclean ; all is holy, for all comes stamped with the print of the nail, which is our King's stamp. And thus there is in everything a sorrow and also a joy which the world understandeth not : a sorrow for sin, and a joy that God's holy love is in action to destroy sin, and that His cause must triumph, and He will be glorified.

The knowledge of the Mediatorial reign of our Lord seems to me to be, in a very sweet and special manner, the "secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him."¹ They will feel it to be a light thing that a world of sin should be a world of sorrow, and that a race which had gone away from God into the far country of unbelief should find it an evil and a bitter thing to do so : they will sympathize with God even whilst their own souls

¹ Ps. xxv. 14.

are torn by the bitter wages of sin, and they will look for a coming glory. T. ERSKINE.

LVIII

Let us receive into our hearts this blessed truth, that God has and can have no other object in His dealings towards us, but simply and solely that of making us holy and happy for ever. He who knows this truly, can have no wish to elude any of God's commandments, or corrections, or judgments, because He feels that by this he should only elude his own blessedness. He can have no other wish than that all God's will should be accomplished on him and in him.

T. ERSKINE.

15. He who sends the storm, steers the vessel.

T. ADAM.

LIX

The sharp sting of present pain, which is God's testimony, through conscience, against sin, is but an intimation of the universal law of His government ; and all the secret hopes by which we strive to silence this warning, and whisper to ourselves, that in our case sin will not bring misery, are met here. We see that, if we will sin, we must suffer ; that our sins do not, as we are ready to believe, of themselves leave us as soon as we have committed them, but that they stay with us, and become part

of us. We have been weaving the web of our life, and it abides still coloured by the threads that we have woven into it; and so far as we can see, sorrow is even needful, as the means of tearing out the lines of past permitted evil. Not that we are to find our atonement in our sorrows; God forbid! for if it were so, our case were utterly beyond the reach of remedy, since all our woe could not atone for any one transgression; but because, through God's blessing on it, suffering is made a means of carrying on His cure within us; not indeed by any virtue of its own, for sorrow and pain have no power to renew the heart of man; of themselves they do but irritate and sour his spirit. He needs a deeper and a more effectual cure; and it is only when sorrow brings us to Him who can work this within us, that it is a blessing. Then, indeed, under the blessed leading of His grace, it turns into the choicest mercy; for to the Christian man there is this mystery in it, it does bring us to Him who is the true and only Purifier, by driving us from the world and from ourselves to Him; by bending our separate wills to His will; by leading us to wait on Him, to seek His purifying Spirit, to cling to the cross of His Son, with all its bitter pains; by setting before us long past sins, even as certain changes in the atmosphere bring out again the faded spots of worn-out stains. So that this connexion between suffering and transgression rests not on an arbitrary decree, which may be dispensed with in our case, but on the necessity of God's holy

nature, on the one hand, and on the very needs of the nature He has given us, on the other. There can, in this world, be no divorce between these two yoke-fellows, sin and suffering. The man who allows himself in any iniquity is taking burning coals into his bosom; and how deeply they may wound him God only knows. Jacob's life was scarred by them, till they brought down his grey hairs, after many sorrows, to the grave.

Here, then, is a lesson of solemn warning; and close beside it is that of joyful submission amidst the afflictions of life.

For what a character does this truth stamp upon them! They are indeed, we know, the consequence of sin; perhaps we may even be able to trace them up to some sin of our own in years long past, and in this there must be bitterness. But, then, what joy is there in this thought (which is the privilege of every believer in Jesus), they are *not* the strokes of anger; they are the blessed remedies of the most kind and skilful of Physicians; they have ever formed the thorny hedge which at some period of their lives has shut in the path along which God's chosen ones have been led on to glory; they are proofs that we are under training; they show that we have a part in the Covenant; they give us good reason to hope that the blessed Spirit has not left us; nay, that He is striving with us, and perfecting for us His blessed work! With what words, therefore, of love does He uphold us in our sharpest sufferings: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasten-

eth :” “God dealeth with you as with sons :”¹ “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings !”² And hear how His children have replied, “Before I was afflicted I went wrong ; but now have I kept Thy word.”³

And here is the true secret of peace in this world of trouble—to yield ourselves always meekly, as the redeemed of Christ, to the hand of God, as of a loving Father ; to know that this is the especial character of our lives, that we are not under a grinding rule of blind necessity, nor under a harsh rod of vindictive infliction, but in a process of restoration ; that joy and sorrow are mingled for us, as He sees best for us ; that our joys are but His love, our sorrows but the deeper tones of that same love ; that we are safe whilst He bids the sun still to shine around us, for that we are His ; and that He will keep us in the dangerous sunshine. Nor do the clouds on the horizon trouble us, for they cannot dim that sunshine, so long as He sees that it is best for us to walk with Him in its glad brightness. It may be He will accept our quiet waiting on Him, and so teach us through it, that we shall hardly need the rougher discipline of sharp affliction. Or if our sun threaten to go down in darkness,—if the clouds gather over it in gloom, still we are with Him ; and to be with Him is, for every child of His, the most really to be at peace. In the storm, He whom we love more than life comes oftentimes the closest to us ; and by the blessed

¹ Heb. xii. 6, 7.

² 1 Pet. iv. 13.

³ Ps. cxix. 67.

power of that Divine Presence, the world, when it is the barest to the eye of sense, abounds the most richly in the truest consolation ; and the sharp edge of earthly anguish grows into the severe reality of heavenly joy.

S. WILBERFORCE.

16. What is misfortune? Whatever separates us from God. What a blessing? Every means of approximation to Him.

T. ADAM.

LX

When sorrow and the cross come upon thee, seek not with the world to distract it; drive it not away with fresh sources of sorrow, but bid it welcome ; cherish it as a heavenly visitant, as a messenger sent from God with healing to thy soul ; and thou shalt find that thou "entertainest angels unawares."¹ Thou shalt find the bow in the cloud, His light arising out of darkness, His form upon the troubled waters ; and if He hush them not, He shall say to thy soul, "Fear not, for I am with thee."² He shall make it gladlier to thee to lie down in trouble and anguish, while He is with thee, than ever any of the joys of this world were while He was less present with thee, or wherein thou forgattest Him.

The blessed lot is not to live joyously in the world undisturbed by sorrow or suffering, having our good things in this life, left to our own ways ; it is to lie low, (well is it for us if it be of our own

¹ Heb. xiii. 2.

² Isa. xli. 10.

accord, yet any how to lie low,) under His cross ; though for a time it lie heavy upon us, it is not so heavy as sin ; though it wound us, they are “the wounds of a friend ;” though its nails pierce us, they are but to let forth the disease which would consume us ; though it bow us to the earth, it places us not so deep as we deserve to be ; it casts us down only, that when we have learnt to lie there in silence and humiliation, He may raise us up.

PLAIN SERMONS.

LXI

Something must be left as a test of the loyalty of the heart : in Paradise, the tree ; in Israel, a Canaanite ; in us, temptation.

R. CECIL.

LXII

What an oppressive burden is taken off a Christian's shoulders by his privilege of leaving all consequences, while in the path of duty, to God ! He has done with, “How shall *I* bear this trouble ?” “How shall *I* remove this difficulty ?” “How shall *I* get through this deep water ?”—but leaves himself in the hands of God.

R. CECIL.

LXIII

Divine relief comes not always when it is most desired, but when it is most fit ; and when that is, He that hath at once all present, past, and future things in His possession, is fittest to determine.

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St. Paul prayed thrice for the removal of that rude thorn to the flesh (whatever that may mean); nay, of the Blessed Virgin Mother herself, her Divine Son would not be found till the third day, thought she sought Him sorrowing: and Lazarus, to whom, even during his sickness, He vouchsafed (a title to which all Cæsar's were but trifles) the style of friend, was permitted, not only to lie a-dying, but to die, his rescue being deferred till it was thought impossible, and was so indeed to any less power than Omnipotence; which manifest that, as no degree of distress is unrelievable by His power, so no extremity of it is inconsistent with His compassion, no, not with His friendship. He whose Spirit inspired the prophets, is in the last of them represented under the notion of a refiner; and it is not the custom of refiners to snatch the beloved metal out of the fire as soon as it feels the violence of that purifying element, nay, nor as soon as it is melted by it; but they let it long endure the brunt of the active flames, actuated by exciting blasts, till it have stood its due time in the fire, and then obtained its full purity and splendour.¹

From "Seraphic Love," by Hon. Robert Boyle.

¹ The great accuracy of the simile of the refiner (Mal. iv. 3, "He shall sit as a refiner,") has been very beautifully shown by a reference to the known practice of persons engaged in that trade. The refiner places himself before the caldron containing the metal, and separates the dross from the pure gold or silver; he continues the operation until he can see his own image clearly reflected in the burning ore. It is thus that God puts those whom He would refine into the crucible of affliction: their "trial is much more precious than that of gold or silver." He sits like a refiner before them, and He does not cease to fan the flame and remove the dross, until He sees His own image reflected in His tried and afflicted servant.

LXIV

To the unenlightened man the world and his own kind may appear like a reed shaken by the wind ; by the sensual man everything may be regarded as the means and fuel of luxury ; but to the Christian, whose eye has been purged, the sphere of whose vision has been enlarged by faith, the world is as a prophet that tells him of God ; and he hears all nature, animate and inanimate, joining in the choral hymn of adoration and thanksgiving to its Creator. Hallelujah is the sound of the waves ; and the mountains reply, Hallelujah ! Hallelujahs float along in the murmuring of the streams, in the whisperings of the grove and forest ; yea, even in the silent courses of the stars, his spirit hears the mystic Hallelujahs.¹

J. Hare, Prophet in the Wilderness.

LXV

To Christ, the incarnate God, our relations are wholly personal. He is not a notional abstraction, not an idea of the mind, enthroned in a logical vacuum. We are bound to Him by all our deepest, strongest, most personal feelings—by our personal consciousness of sin, by our personal need of redemption, by gratitude for personal forgiveness, by love on account of love shown directly, personally to ourselves.

Hare's Victory of Faith.

¹ I have inserted these two extracts as well because they were the last which were made from any English writer by the departed, as because of their great beauty.

The Communion of Saints¹

THERE are some subjects, the consideration of which, by a kind of tacit consent, has been in latter days almost universally abandoned. Of such subjects, none has suffered more than that which is before us. Men have well-nigh ceased to inquire the meaning of the phrase, Communion of Saints. They have professed their belief in it a thousand times, but have never troubled themselves to think what such a profession implied.

It is in seasons of bereavement that this subject will often first present itself to the mind. It then challenges attention; the heart craves something which the doctrine involved in it seems alone capable of supplying. We feel as the Thessalonians felt. We have lost our friends. Death seems to have cast its broad shadow between us and them. When, where, how shall we recover them? Are they quite gone from us? Have they any sympathy with us still? Are their spirits as insensible as

¹ This essay was written subsequently to the ever to be lamented death of the compiler of the volume.

the bodies are, that we have shrouded and buried ? Or have they still a communion, in their bright and holy rest, with us whom they have left in this troubled world ?

We propose considering these questions ; and in order the better to do it, we would first inquire why the Church has inserted the article of the Communion of Saints in the sacred symbol.

The place which it occupies suggests the answer. It is, that we may believe in the reality of the connexion which subsists between every member of the Church Catholic, whether on earth or in heaven. "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the *Communion of Saints*." What a train of marvels is here placed before us ; and how beautiful is the connexion in which they lie !

"I believe in the Holy Ghost," *i.e.* I believe in the reality of His existence ; and I believe in His Godhead. But if I believe in His Godhead, I believe in His Omnipresence, for Omnipresence is a necessary attribute to Deity. God must be everywhere present.

But is there not a speciality about the Omnipresence of the Holy Ghost ? Certainly there is. He has His special residence. Just as the Eternal Son had His peculiar dwelling on earth until the hour of His ascension : so also, though invisibly, the Eternal Spirit has His special residence in the hearts of His people, and within the bosom of His elect Spouse the Church.

I add, therefore, to this article of my creed

another verity, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." I believe that there is a Church of all the saints, and that it is a great temple, of which the Holy Ghost is the inhabitant. "Ye," says the Apostle, "are the temple of the Holy Ghost:" not "the *temples*" in this place, he saith; but all of you together, the Church, are the *temple* of the indwelling Spirit.

How well and wisely, and in no figurative, but in truest sense,—we may add the word, how *divinely* has this article been added! The Apostle undoubtedly declared it in the passage quoted in the Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iii. 16); but on that very account it seems more important that it should be brought out in perfect distinctness, as a separate article of faith.

But if this great temple is pervaded by a living Spirit (if it be called a temple, because the Holy Spirit dwells in it), what are its dimensions? Are they limited by the boundaries of the Church on earth, or do they extend farther? The next clause brings this plainly before our minds: "I believe in the Communion of Saints." Few have thought of confining this article of faith to the communion of those saints that are living here. That we have communion with *them*, is a solid and a blessed truth; but it is perhaps even a nearer and more intimate communion, that we enjoy with the saints departed.

What then is that communion?

1. It is the sharing of a common life. The life

of each saint is a separate individual thing; the life of the Church of Christ is that which pervades all. It is the virtue which goes out of Him and pervades them : it flows through all the members, and could we track the life back to its source and fountain-head, we should find that "all its fresh springs are in Him."

In this respect we can scarcely separate the thought of Christ from that of the Holy Spirit ; for the Spirit is God, and Christ is God ; and the members of the Church, both above and below, are inhabited by the Spirit, and lived in by that life which the "living stone" communicates to every "lively stone." There is, in fact, a perpetual circulation of life through the mighty whole, the great Church Catholic, above and below.

And that it must pervade *that* whole, in a manner, to a great degree, uniform and the same, is evident from this consideration,—the Head is the same to the Church militant and to the Church quiescent. *Christ does not cease to be the Head to a saint departed.* That saint is still a living member of that body whereof He is the Head ; but that body is the Church mystical ; therefore, the Church mystical is composed of the quick and the dead ; in other words, the life that is in the quick is also in the dead, and therefore they (the quick and the dead) still have perfect communion in Christ.

2. But if we believe in this communion, how may we enjoy it?

When we think of our departed friends, our souls seem often lost in the obscurity of their revealed state. We scarcely know where they are or what they are engaged in. If they are in that abode of separate spirits which is called Paradise, yet we do not know where Paradise is. Is it near us, or is it very distant? Is it, as some have thought, in the "heart of the earth?" Are they the "things that are under the earth?" or are they in one of the planets, in the moon, or in the sun itself? or are they any where within the circumference of that mighty universe which is vaulted by day with the blue empyrean, and by night with the glittering concave of the stars? But that empyrean seems itself without bound; and those stars seem so immeasurably distant, that the thought of either perplexes us. Are our departed friends beyond even these? Ah! then, how far, how hopelessly removed! The idea fills a void heart with nothing but the perplexity of distress and desire.

But it is not evidently the will of the Most High, our Father, that His children should suffer from such unsatisfied yearnings. We may sorrow, but not as those that are without hope. What, then, is the hope referred to? It is the second Advent of Christ. At that second Advent, He will bring back those that sleep in Him. (1 Thess. iv.) They sleep, then, *in Him*; they are in His keeping: hidden within the shady hollow of His mighty heart; for if He will bring them *then*, they must be under His keeping *now*. St. Paul has in posi-

tive terms assured us of this, when he says, that "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord;"¹ and no less so when he declares by implication, that "*to depart*," and "to be *with Christ*,"² is one and the same thing.

It is upon texts like these that the Church grounds her strong assurance of the happiness of the saints departed. She believes, and she believes she declares, that the spirits of the just are at once in the presence of God. The words of one of the last prayers in the order for the Burial of the Dead, assure us of this : " Almighty God, with whom *do live* the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, *are in joy and felicity*; we give Thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world; beseeching Thee, that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy kingdom ; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

How cheering are these words to survivors ! We have just seen the coffin lowered ; we have lost sight of the object of our heart's tenderest affections ; the cold grave (so it seems at first) has got

¹ 2 Cor. v. 8.

² Phil. i. 23.

what we have possessed, and what we long to recover. But no! the words (and they are the clear, solemn, and unhesitating words of the Church) tell us that it is not so: our brother or our sister is not there. The dews shall distil, the showers shall fall, and the storm shall sweep over their coffined forms, but they themselves are far away; they are at home; they are in the presence of Christ; in the keeping of God: they rest, happy, happy spirits! in His presence, "in joy and felicity." No room, therefore; for our pity! let us neither pity, nor—what we may be more tempted to do—too keenly envy them; let us bless God who has delivered them from the miseries of this sinful world; and whilst we earnestly strive to follow and patiently wait to meet them, let us constantly pray for "that perfect consummation in bliss, both of body and soul," for them as well as for ourselves, for which the Church directs us to supplicate.

But there is something peculiar in the expression of this same Apostle, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The death here spoken of is the death to sin: he says therefore, to true Christians, that they are already dead and buried; nay, more, that their life is even now in the company and keeping of Christ. But if this be the case, death natural can make no alteration in this respect. The life of a saint departed can only be with Christ: this is its *euthanasia*. But *it was with Him before*: it is not therefore changed in locality; it remains where it was, in blessedness and in bliss.

How comforting is this view! Am I in Christ? Then is my life with Him, and the lives of those whom I have lost are with Him; and so with my life also. The body is laid down; it was but a garment of pain, a torture-robe, a shirt of fire; but the life is where it was before, only exalted through struggle well and safely passed, and now perfectly purified.

To know this for a verity, without knowing the mode of its true existence, is a matter of exceeding comfort, and we might well rest in it; but the mind will wander and imagine; and whence can the imaginings of a devout soul come, but from Him who gave the imagination? When that which we may well call the pinion of the soul bears us upwards, we may reasonably trust that the sights it seems to behold are not all delusive. Now, if the spirit of the departed saint is with Christ in Paradise, and if, even before it departed, it was with Him, and if I too am with Him, and if our union with Him was our closest bond of communion on earth, so undoubtedly it must be now: united with him in Christ, I am just as really in his presence and society as I was before he died.¹

1 "The saints of God, living in the Church of Christ, are in communion with all the saints departed out of this life and admitted to the presence of God. Jerusalem is sometimes taken for the Church on earth, sometimes for that part of the Church which is in heaven, to show that as both are *represented* by one, so both *are* but one city of God. Wherefore thus doth the Apostle speak to such as are called to the Christian faith: 'Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made

But then, even on earth, the nearer the saints draw to their Head, the nearer they draw to one another. If I, then, by faith and prayer, and all holy deeds, draw nearer to Him now, in thus doing I draw nearer to them. He is their centre, and He is mine also; and the shorter the radius of my distance from Him, the shorter the diameter of my separation from them.

But then the heart sighs involuntarily, Yes, but there was a sensible communication then; the voice, the hand, the eye—there is no such communication now. Most true there is not, and yet

perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.' (Heb. xii. 22-24.) Indeed, the communion of saints in the Church of Christ with those which are departed, is demonstrated by their communion with the saints alive. For if I have communion with a saint of God, as such, while he liveth here, I must still have communion with him when he is departed hence; because the foundation of that communion cannot be removed by death. The mystical union between Christ and His Church, the spiritual conjunction of the members to the Head, is the true foundation of that communion which one member had with another, all the members living and increasing by the same influence which they receive from Him. But death, which is nothing else but the separation of the soul from the body, maketh no separation in the mystical union, no breach of the spiritual conjunction; and consequently there must continue the same communion, because there remaineth the same foundation. Indeed, the saint departed, before his death, had *some* communion with the hypocrite,—as hearing the word, professing the faith, receiving the sacraments together; which being in things only external, as they were common to them both, and all such external actions ceasing in the person dead, the hypocrite remaining loseth all communion with the saint departing; and the saints surviving cease to have further fellowship with the hypocrite dying. But the true and unfeigned holiness of man, wrought by the powerful influence of the Spirit of God, not only remaineth, but also is improved after death; as the correspondence of the internal holiness was the communion between their persons in their life, they cannot be said to be divided by death, which had no power over that sanctity by which they were first conjoined."—*Bishop Pearson on the Creed.*

there is that which is like it. My Saviour, the Son of Man, the new Head of humanity, has declared His presence by sensible tokens: He enters me verily and indeed, when I communicate by a living faith in His second holy sacrament. But if I thus really feed on Him, in whose presence my departed friends live, and if *I* have His mystical presence, and *they* His actual presence, have I not a sensible token of their nearness to me? Do I not in that blessed ordinance enjoy in a peculiar manner the communion of saints? For the very reason why it is called the sacrament of the Holy Communion is, that it is the most marked symbol, as well as the most efficacious and affecting means of communion with them. It is in that blessed ordinance that Jesus Christ is most evidently set forth as crucified amongst us; it shows forth His death until He come: it is in that sacrament that all the rays of Divine love and tenderness seem to meet as in the focus of a burning-glass. If we have (and blessed be His name we both have and enjoy) communion with Him by faith, and in prayer, and in praise, and in the Word, we specially, as well as most significantly, enjoy communion in that sacrament, and do verily and indeed partake His body broken and His blood poured out: we are very members incorporate in His mystical body; we are one with Him, and He with us; and that, by a very special, lively, and faithful intercommunion of us the members with Him the Head.

And then let us remember this: the world is a

great phantasmagoria; it is full of shapes, and forms, and images, and veils, all drawn before the real and the true. In that real and true we are living—living quite as much as they that are no longer clouded by this unreal world. We stand before the face of our Lord, though we do not see each other.

We may give a familiar illustration of this:—If two persons stand before a third, and the eye of that third is open upon them; if he could look upon both at once, the images of the two would be formed close together in the retina of the eye of the third. But Christ looks at once both on me and on my loved and departed friend, and therefore both our images are formed together in Him. Pleasant thought! we are together; *together* not in what may seem to be only an imaginary locality, like the space behind a looking-glass, but in that which in reality is our only true place of being, and of spiritual existence; our forms, faces, figures, are in the mirror of His beautiful countenance and calm deep eye, as much as we were ever together on earth; perhaps far more so: for *there*, all is true, and clear, and open; here, corruption, and deceit, and mortality, and the flesh, cloud and darken, and deface and defile everything; they are great separation-walls between the truest and the tenderest hearts.

But do they who have gone before, know actually what we are doing? The Scriptures would suggest that in part they do: that they know *all* that relates to us, we cannot imagine. There are the two

following great difficulties in the way of conceiving that they do. For, in the first place, their knowledge must come either by the means of personal witness, or through the channel of the communication of angels, or through that of the Lord Himself. But if they look upon us, we can scarcely suppose but that they must be near us ; and if they are near us, how can they be also resting in that presence which we believe to constitute the very element, as well as the perfection of Paradise ? It is not to be denied that modes may be suggested whereby, in some degree, this difficulty may be met. Indeed, the very obscurity of our knowledge in regard to all the accidents of the state of the departed, would facilitate the suggestion of such modes ; for you may make what figures you please out of clouds, or in moonlight ; but still all such must be hypothetical and imaginary, in the most unsatisfying sense of the terms.

But, in the second place, if we give up the idea of the near and personal presence of the departed, and still hold to the notion of their knowing all that relates to us, there is something so full of difficulty in this hypothesis, that we can scarcely retain it long. Can we believe either the holy angels, or the Lord Himself, to communicate to the departed, the bad and the indifferent circumstances that happen to us—our woes, our sorrows, our weakness ? Would not such communication be a “troubling” of those who have escaped from trouble ?

This, indeed, is the difficulty which always meets

us when we think of the departed having communion with us in any way *except through the Lord Jesus Himself*. It is impossible to believe that they can be allowed to be harassed by the knowledge of all the sad deeds and mixed feelings of those whom they have left behind; such knowledge would destroy their peace.

But then the Scriptures would lead us to believe that they know *something*. St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, chap. xii., exhorts them to activity by the thought of the great cloud of witnesses with which they are surrounded. Now, the figure is taken from the games and combats in the Roman amphitheatre or stadium: and it must be particularly remarked, that at the time of the games, a special seat was assigned to those who had been crowned in former contests. Now, we can imagine how the thought of their presence would stimulate a combatant: he would know and feel the discriminating eye with which they would regard him; how they would understand the merits of his practice; how they would appreciate his skill; how they would mourn over his failure. It is true that "witness" may mean only witness in the sense of *martyr*; but this meaning would neither satisfy the figure nor the reasoning. Taking it in the other, which we may conclude to be the true sense, it satisfies both; and then see how it applies to us as Christian gladiators. We believe those that have gone before us, the conquering, triumphant dead, to be spectators of our contest. Here is the limit,—they are witnesses

to the way in which we are carrying on the great battle, but *not of anything else*. But are they witnesses of all our falls, our wounds, our blows, or buffets? If sometimes we are smitten down by the great enemy ; if sometimes our own evil hearts lead us astray ; if we fall aside, do they see us then? If at their departure from us we are weighed down with overmuch sorrow, do they see that? The question is difficult, and I would thus venture to answer it. We may believe that Christ *communicates to them all that it would do us service, or give them happiness to know*.

If, therefore, we are growing in faith, deepening our repentance, waxing more valiant in fight, turning to flight, as we have never done before, the armies of the lusts that are aliens to our peace ; then we may really believe that all these blessed symptoms of our spiritual state are communicated to them : and it is a right rejoicing thing to think how their souls may bathe in new delight as they receive the blessed intelligence.

But can this be all that they know? We can scarcely believe so, and for this reason : a sympathy, only in success, is a very imperfect sympathy ; it is not the sympathy of the Son of man : but if it be not *His* sympathy, and if they are one with Him, we can scarcely conceive it to be theirs. Real communion does evidently imply something more than this.

But then the objection arises, that more than this might interrupt their rest. Now, in answer, it may

be observed, that it is perhaps a low conception of their state previous to the great consummation to imagine of it that it can only tolerate happiness. When they were upon earth, they deeply felt our difficulties. It was *one of their greatest privileges*, and they felt it to be so, *to energize in prayer for those they loved, when those beloved ones were in sadness or in difficulty*. May we not imagine that the same feeling of this kind of pleasurable, though not passionate energy, may still be theirs?¹ They

1 "They which first found this part of the article in the Creed, and delivered their exposition to us, have made no greater enlargement of this communion, as to the saints of heaven, than the society of hope, esteem, and imitation, on our side, *of desires and supplications on their side*."

"What is now taught by the Church of Rome is, as an unwarrantable, so a *novitious* interpretation."—*Bp. Pearson on the Creed*.

"Why do we not run with eager haste to see our country? A great multitude of beloved ones, parents, brethren, children, await our arrival; the thick and thronging crowd regret our absence—secure of their own safety, they are *solicitous for our salvation*."—*St. Augustine, Sermon 181, quoted by Bp. Pearson*.

"I believe, O most holy Jesus, that Thy saints here below have communion with the saints above; they praying for us in heaven, we here on earth celebrating their memorials, rejoicing at their bliss, giving Thee thanks for their labours of love, and imitating their examples; for which all love and glory be to Thee."—*Bishop Ken, Practice of Divine Love*.

"Nor have we communion only with the saints on earth, but are of one city, and one family, with such as are already got safe to heaven. Doubtless, they exercise that communion towards us, by loving and praying for their brethren, whom they have left behind them. And we are to exercise it towards them, not by addressing petitions to them, which we are neither authorized to offer, nor have any ground to think they can hear; but by rejoicing in their happiness, thanking God for the grace which He hath bestowed on them, and the examples which they have left us, holding their memories in honour, imitating their virtues, and beseeching the Disposer of all things, that, having followed them in holiness here, we may meet them in happiness hereafter; and become

are not weighed down now by the body of death ; they can pray as "angels that excel in strength," flying on wings that never tire. And to pray thus, to wrestle like him who was a "Prince with God" in prayer, may be a part of the privileges of their triumphant condition. Passive rest is not that which we can imagine to be the happiness of a soul even in the separate state. As the sky-birds whirl and soar with a kind of joyous energy when the winds are high, battling almost with the clouds ; so may we imagine those blessed heavenly ones that have gone from us, to wrestle in prayer, and meet and contend with the sorrow-clouds that darken and distress us, whom they so deeply love. There is nothing derogatory to the high-priestly intercession of Christ in this, although it is perfectly evident that it might be easily carried too far. This, however, is our safety, that all communion of the saints, whether on earth or in heaven, is *through the medium of Christ*. It is not, as the Romanists say, that they (the saints and the blessed Virgin) are between Christ and our souls ; but that Christ, the perfection of mercy, may very probably allow them in heaven the great privilege of intercession which He gave them on earth ; He Himself being the centre of all such communion.

in the fullest sense, *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; having, with all those that are departed in the true faith of His holy Name, our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*"—From Archbishop Secker's *Lectures on the Catechism*.

For, consider again :—When our Lord graciously commands us, by His Apostle, to pray one for the other, this would seem, in the first instance, to conflict with the all-sufficiency of His prevailing mediation. Why does it not ? Simply because no prayer made for our brother or our sister here upon earth can be availing, *unless it be made through Him.*

But why is this kind of intercession enjoined ? Most evidently to bind up ALL the members of Christ's body in the communion of a most holy and perfect sympathy. That, this sympathy does exist in the bosoms of those that are gone, is evident from various parts of Scripture.

When Moses and Elias appeared on the transfiguration mount, the theme that filled their souls, was the sufferings and the kingdom of Christ. That which fills now the souls of the saints departed must be the same ; and their interest in the saints on earth must be all based on their interest in that same kingdom of Christ, and be connected with the share which they (that is, we) are taking or should take in this great consummation.

But then there is more than this general interest ; there is a feeling and a compassion connected with our sufferings, our dangers, and our trials. The cry of the souls under the altar¹ shows us this : it was a cry of weariness at the long-continued sufferings of the saints in general.

But if there is this general interest, may we not

¹ Rev. vi. 9.

conclude that there is a special anxiety about the state of those they love? The parable of Dives and Lazarus shows us this incidentally. We cannot imagine our Lord to have put a case which had not a foundation of truth. *We cannot imagine Him to have described Dives as caring for his brethren, if those that sleep have no care at all for those that are alive and remain.*

There is something to a sorrowing heart very soothing in these thoughts. We look to Jesus as our common centre. As friends at a distance hold communion by looking each night at some bright meridian star, so we do look at the face of Jesus, and know that our departed friend is gazing too. As friends read the same passage of Holy Writ at a certain hour, and believe that the common Spirit through this means doth beget a perfect communion; nay, as the whole Church, in her daily or weekly services, holds blessed sympathetic communion by the means of this common reading of God's Word, and by united prayer, so do we, looking up in like manner to Jesus, communicate our thoughts, our feelings, our regrets, or our gratitude, in respect of those our friends that are with Him. Can we believe that He makes no communication of what we are doing to them?

If we have ever neglected or injured them, and desire that they should know that we are lying on our bosoms, and smiting upon them in deep soul-penitence, would not such penitence give them a

serious joy? Or, if we look back at their graces and their virtues, and call them daily to mind, and thank God that we have seen and known, and loved and honoured them; is it unscriptural to believe, that He, our common Friend, may communicate this to them as they now lie in His bosom? Can we not imagine that they would strike their lyres to new tunes of praise, and sing fresh hallelujahs to Him who had enabled them to glorify Him by obedience when they were here, and to leave the bright legacy of their examples behind them? Or, if we are sighing or sad, or in difficulty, and pine after the love of those that were once our friends and our counsellors; is it contrary to scriptural analogy that He should communicate these sorrows of ours to them, and give them new opportunities of interceding for us? If the souls under the altar cry out in compassion and sympathy for their suffering brethren, may we not believe that they who are also there,—our friends, brothers, sisters, parents, husbands, wives,—implore for us? Or if (for we may put many cases) we arrive in our daily reading at some passage of Holy Writ, which we remember to have given them instruction or comfort, when they were with us; and if such passage come to us with a fresh and sensible power, when we connect it with their memories; may we not well imagine, yea, believe, that He, in whose presence they dwell, communicates the fact and the feeling, and so brings a new wave of satisfaction over their beatified spirits?

How soothing are these thoughts! We are bereaved, it may be; we walk on earth in silence and in solitude; we live a lonely life; so it seems to others, so too often it will seem to us. But then, think of the communion of saints. We are all of us together in the great circle of which He our Head is the centre; yea, all of us are together, both living and dead. When, therefore, I seem alone in my chamber, or alone on the hills, or alone on the sea-shore, or alone in the crowd, I am not really alone; I have companionship, both earthly and heavenly; I am with Christ, whom I know as a brother, for I am acquainted with Him as the Son of Joseph, the poor carpenter; and I remember Him as the lonely man who walked by the Lake of Tiberias, and used to cross over Kedron, and to wander about Mount Olivet. I remember Him, therefore, as I would remember and think of a dead friend, by the places He frequented, the walks He used to take, and the pursuits He followed. But my earthly friend whom I have lost is with that lowly lofty Man; they talk together, as He once talked with John, or Peter, or James, or Philip, or Levi. And do they not talk of me? And if I speak to Him, exalted as He now is in power and omnipresent Majesty, will He not communicate all that I say of right and true, to my friend that now lies in His bosom, and is with Him as a chosen disciple?

The reason that these thoughts may seem strange to some is twofold. The first is, the Romish abuse

of the doctrine of communion of saints ; the other is, the forgetfulness of men, that the body, like the Head, is but One.

If we required a visible Head, as the Romanists do, this twofold Headship, that on earth and that in heaven, would almost preclude, or at least would sensibly interfere with the communion of the saints through the One only true Head and centre of union. But we do not want this earthly Head ; it goes to destroy this oneness of the body: it separates the Church 'below from the Church above, by giving to the former a distinct head of union on earth. We believe the Body to be One all through the universe ; and the unseen state to be as real as the visible ; and both together, to make up this great Church Catholic, of which Christ alone is the Head. Thus we live, looking not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen ; holding communion with the saints departed, as well as with the saints alive ; with those that are absent in heaven, as well as those that are distant and absent on earth.

And this feeling of the reality of this communion, helps us wonderfully in submitting to death's cold and dark separation.

If we are removed from a friend on earth, we know ordinarily that we can find him at any time ; and, if we have the means, and if duty permits, that we can go to him ; or at any rate, that we can correspond with him by letter. There is—and we should expect in that dispensation that has

brought life and immortality to light, that there must be, that which is analogous to all this in our communion with the saints that rest. *We always know where to find them*, for they are in Christ. We shall go to them when duty permits, for we shall go when God, the Lord of duty, calls us: and until we go, we can correspond; for Jesus will communicate every letter of holy love we write, or pray, or sigh. He is (so to speak) the centre of our correspondence; He will communicate nothing that would break their rest, and everything that would pour balm into their hearts and into ours.

We must remember that earthly things and earthly relationships are but patterns of heavenly things and heavenly relationships. All that there is of a blessed character here, has its perfect correlative there; and if the body be, therefore, as we believe it to be, One; then our correspondence and communion with them in Him, now that they are gone, is the same as it was with them before their departure: the Body, as we have observed above, is as strictly One as the Head is One.

And this was beautifully signified by the habit which for a long time prevailed in the Church, of celebrating the Holy Communion on the death of any eminent saint. It figured forth the truth of the oneness of the body of Christ. It repeated to the Church the truth of its Catholic incorporation. It told the members that dwell on earth that they were members with those who had gone to heaven. It told the quick that they were still one with the

dead ; for they were partakers of one life, and that life was Christ.

And this would lead us by a reflex power to a more realizing sense of the position of the departed ; for, by believing ourselves to be sharers of the same life with them, we attain a more perfect conviction of their state of life. We think of them as still living, and having their being in God, though in another great chamber from that in which we remain, and disencumbered of the bodies which we bear with us : we are both and all in the same great temple, but *they* have passed within its veil ; we that are here are in the outer court,—they are in the heavenly chancel :¹ there they converse with those who seemed once so separated from them, merely because they lived here long ago ; but who were, in fact, all their lives, their companions in sympathy and hope : they mingle among the early

¹ "Every one may learn from hence what he is to understand by this part of the article, in which he professeth to believe *the communion of saints* ; for thereby he is conceived to express thus much :—I am fully persuaded of this as of a necessary and infallible truth, that such persons as are truly sanctified in the Church of Christ, while they live among the crooked generations of men, and struggle with all the miseries of this world, have fellowship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost dwelling with them, and taking up their habitations in them ; that beside the external fellowship which they have in the word and sacraments with all the members of the Church, they have an intimate union and conjunction with all the saints on earth as the living members of Christ ; nor is this union separated by the death of any ; but as Christ, in whom we live, is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, so have they fellowship with all the saints which, from the death of Abel, have ever departed in the true faith and fear of God, and now enjoy the presence of the Father, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. And thus I believe *the communion of saints*."—*Pearson on the Creed*.

saints ; they salute Abel, and Enoch, and Abraham, and Moses, and the prophets, and the Apostles, and the saints, and the martyrs : they see the mysterious form of the kingly Melchisedec, and the veil is removed from the hidden history of Adam and Eve. In such society we may feel confident they are moving, *where* exactly, we do not know ; and it is an almost bewildering thought that they who talked with us but a few hours ago are now perhaps far beyond the sunlight and the stars ; but such is the infinitude of the power of God, and such is the majesty of our destiny !

We will conclude these thoughts with the following beautiful extract from the works of Bishop Hall :—

“ As there is a perfect union betwixt the glorious saints in heaven, and a union (though imperfect) betwixt the saints on earth ; so there is a union (partly perfect and partly imperfect) between the saints in heaven and the saints below upon earth ; perfect in respect of those glorified saints above, imperfect in respect of the weak returns we are able to make them again. Let no man think, that because those blessed souls are out of sight, far distant in another world, and we are here toiling in a vale of tears, that we have therefore lost all mutual regard to each other. No, there is still, and ever will be, a secret but unfailing correspondence between heaven and earth. The present happiness of those heavenly citizens cannot have abated aught of their knowledge and charity, but must needs have

raised them to a higher pitch of both ; they, therefore, who are now glorious comprehensors, cannot but in a generality retain the notice of the sad condition of us poor travellers here below, panting towards our rest together with them ; and in common wish for the happy consummation of this our weary pilgrimage, in the fruition of their glory. That they have any perspective whereby they can see down into our particular wants, is that which we find no ground to believe. It is enough that they have an universal apprehension of the estate of Christ's warfaring Church upon the face of the earth (Rev. vi. 10), and, as fellow-members of the same mystical body, long for a perfect glorification of the whole. As for us wretched pilgrims, who are yet left here below to be tried with many difficulties, we cannot forget that better half of us which is now triumphant in glory. O ye blessed saints above, we honour your memories so far as we ought ; we do with praise recount your virtues ; we magnify your victories ; we bless God for your happy exemption from the misery of this world, and for your estate in that blessed immortality ; we imitate your holy examples ; we long and pray for a happy consociation with you ; we dare not raise temples, dedicate altars, direct prayers, to you ; we dare not, finally, offer anything to you which you are unwilling to receive,—nor put anything upon you which you would disclaim as prejudicial to your Creator and Redeemer. It is abundant comfort to us, that some part of us is in the fruition of that glory where-

to we (the other poor labouring part) desire and strive to aspire ; that our heads and shoulders are above water, whilst the other limbs are yet wading through the stream."

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with *all the company of heaven*, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name ; evermore praising Thee, and saying, " Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High."

C. E. K.

Prayers

TO BE SAID BY SICK PERSONS

Under the Pressure of great Infirmitv

O HOLY JESUS, Thou art a merciful High Priest, and touched with the sense of our infirmities : Thou knowest the sharpness of my sickness, and the weakness of my person. The clouds are gathered about me, and Thou hast covered me with Thy storm. My understanding hath not such apprehension of things as formerly. Lord ! let Thy mercy support me, Thy Spirit guide me, and lead me through the valley of this death safely ; that I may pass it patiently, holily, with perfect resignation ; and let me rejoice in the Lord, in the hopes of pardon, in the expectation of glory, in the sense of Thy mercies, in the refreshments of Thy Spirit, in a victory over all temptations.

Thou hast promised to be with us in tribulation. Lord ! my soul is troubled, and my body is weak,

and my hope is in Thee, and my enemies are busy and mighty; now make good Thy holy promise. Now, O holy Jesus, now let Thy hand of grace be upon me; restrain my ghostly enemies, and give me all sorts of spiritual assistances. Lord, remember Thy servant in the day when Thou bindest up Thy jewels.

O take from me all tediousness of spirit, all impatience and unquietness: let me possess my soul in patience, resigning soul and body into Thy hands as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and a blessed Redeemer.

O holy Jesu, Thou didst die for us: by Thy sad, pungent, and intolerable pains, which Thou enduredst for me, have pity on me, and ease my pain, or increase my patience. Lay on me no more than Thou shalt enable me to bear. I have deserved it all, and more, and infinitely more. Lord, I am weak and ignorant, timorous and inconstant, and I fear lest something should happen that may discompose the state of my soul, and that may displease Thee. Do what Thou wilt with me, so Thou dost but preserve me in Thy fear and favour. Thou knowest that it is my great fear, but let Thy Spirit secure, that nothing may be able to separate me from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Then smite me here, that Thou mayest spare me for ever: and yet, O Lord, "smite me friendly," for Thou knowest my infirmities. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of truth. Come, Holy Spirit,

help me in this conflict. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen. BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

In the Beginning of Sickness

O Almighty God, merciful and gracious, who in Thy justice didst send sorrow and tears, sickness and death, into the world as a punishment for man's sins, and hast comprehended all under sin, and this sad covenant of suffering; not to destroy us, but that Thou mightest have mercy upon all, making Thy justice to minister to mercy, short afflictions to an eternal weight of glory. As Thou hast turned my sins into sickness, so turn my sickness to the advantages of holiness and religion, of mercy and pardon; of faith and hope, of grace and glory. Thou hast now called me to the fellowship of sufferings: Lord, by the instrument of religion, let my present condition be so sanctified, that my sufferings may be united to the sufferings of my Lord, that so Thou mayest pity me and assist me. Relieve my sorrow, and support my spirit: direct my thoughts, and sanctify the accidents of my sickness, so that the punishment of my sin may be the school of virtue; in which, since Thou hast now entered me, Lord, make me a holy proficient; that I may behave myself as a son under discipline, humbly and obediently, evenly and penitently, that I may come by this means nearer unto Thee; that if I shall go forth of this sickness by the gate of life and

health, I may return to the world with great strength of spirit, to run a new race of a stricter holiness and a more severe religion ; or, if I pass from hence with the outlet of death, I may enter into the bosom of my Lord, and may feel the present joys of a certain hope of that sea of pleasures in which all Thy saints and servants shall be comprehended to eternal ages. Grant this, for Jesus Christ's sake, our dearest Lord and Saviour. Amen.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

An Act of Resignation

O eternal God, Thou hast made me and sustained me ; Thou hast blessed me in all the days of my life, and hast taken care of me in all variety of accidents ; and nothing happens to me in vain, nothing without Thy Providence ; and I know Thou smitest Thy servants in mercy, and with designs of the greatest pity in the world. Lord, I humbly lie down under Thy rod : do with me as Thou pleasest ; do Thou choose for me not only the whole state and condition of being, but every little and great accident of it. Keep me safe by Thy grace, and then use what instrument Thou pleasest of bringing me to Thee. Lord, I am not solicitous of the passage, so I may get to Thee. Only, O Lord, remember my infirmities, and let Thy servant rejoice in Thee always, and feel, and confess, and glory in Thy goodness. O be Thou as delightful

to me in this my medicinal sickness, as ever Thou wert in any of the dangers of my prosperity. Let me not peevishly refuse Thy pardon, at the rate of a severe discipline. I am Thy servant and Thy creature, Thy purchased possession, and Thy son : I am all Thine ; and because Thou hast mercy in store for all that trust in Thee, I cover mine eyes, and in silence wait for the time of my redemption. Amen.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

For the Grace of Patience

Most merciful and gracious Father, who, in the redemption of lost mankind by the Passion of Thy most holy Son, hast established a covenant of sufferings, I bless and magnify Thy Name, that Thou hast adopted me into the inheritance of sons, and hast given me a portion of my elder brother. Lord, the cross falls heavy and sits uneasy upon my shoulders ; my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak : I humbly beg of Thee that I may now rejoice in this Thy dispensation and effect of Providence. I know and am persuaded that Thou art then as gracious when Thou smitest us for amendment or trial, as when Thou relievest our wearied bodies, in compliance with our infirmity. I rejoice, O Lord, in thy rare and mysterious mercy, who by sufferings hast turned our misery into advantages unspeakable ; for so Thou makest us like to Thy Son, and givest us a gift that the angels never did

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receive ; for they cannot die in conformity to and in imitation of their Lord and ours ; but, blessed be Thy Name, we can, and, dearest Lord, let it be so. Amen.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

Thou who art the God of patience and consolation, strengthen me in the inner man, that I may bear the yoke and burden of the Lord without any uneasy and useless murmurs, and ineffective unwillingness. Lord, I am unable to stand under the cross, unable of myself ; but Thou, O holy Jesus, who didst feel the burden of it, who didst sink under it, and wert pleased to admit a man to bear part of the load, when Thou underwentst all for him,—be Thou pleased to ease this load by fortifying my spirit, that I may be strongest when I am weakest, and may be able to do and suffer everything Thou pleasest, through Christ, who strengthens me. Lord, if Thou wilt support me, I will for ever praise Thee : if Thou wilt suffer the load to press me yet more heavily, I will cry unto Thee, and complain unto my God ; and at last I will lie down and die, and by the mercies and intercession of the holy Jesus, and the conduct of Thy blessed Spirit, and the ministry of angels, pass into those mansions where holy souls rest and weep no more. Lord, pity me ; Lord, sanctify this my sickness ; Lord, strengthen me ; holy Jesus, save me and deliver me. Thon knowest how shamefully I have fallen with pleasure ; in Thy mercy and very pity, let me

not fall with pain too. O, let me never charge God foolishly, nor offend Thee by my impatience and uneasy spirit, nor weaken the hands and hearts of those that charitably minister to my needs ; but let me pass through the valley of tears, the valley of the shadow of death, with safety and peace, with a meek spirit, and a sense of the Divine mercies ; and though Thou breakest me in pieces, my hope is, Thou wilt gather me up in the gatherings of eternity. Grant this, Eternal God, gracious Father, for the merits and intercession of our merciful High Priest, who once suffered for us, and for ever intercedes for us, our most gracious and ever blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

A Prayer when the Sick take Physic

O most blessed and eternal Jesus, Thou who art the great Physician of our souls, and the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in Thy wings, to Thee is given by Thy Heavenly Father the government of all the world ; and Thou disposest every great and little accident to Thy Father's honour, and to the good and comfort of them that love and serve Thee ; be pleased to bless the ministry of Thy servant, in order to my ease and health ; direct his judgment, prosper the medicines, and dispose the chances of my sickness fortunately, that I may feel the blessing and loving-kindness of the Lord, in

the ease of my pain, and the restitution of my health; that I, being restored to the society of the living, and to thy solemn assemblies, may praise Thee and Thy goodness secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation of Thy redeemed ones, here in the outer courts of the Lord, and hereafter in Thy eternal temple, for ever and ever. Amen.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

O holy and eternal Jesu, who didst pity mankind lying in sin and misery, and didst choose our sadness and sorrows, that Thou mightest make us to partake of Thy felicities; let Thine eyes pity me, Thy hands support me, Thy holy feet tread down all the difficulties in my way to heaven: let me dwell in Thy heart, be instructed with Thy wisdom, moved by Thy affections, choose with Thy will, and be clothed with Thy righteousness; that in the day of Judgment I may be found having on Thy garments, sealed with Thy impression; and that, bearing upon every faculty and member the character of my elder brother, I may not be cast out with strangers and unbelievers. Amen.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

Prayer

O eternal God, most merciful Father, who hast revealed Thyself to mankind in Christ Jesus, full

of pity and compassion, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin ; be pleased to effect these Thy admirable mercies upon Thy servant, whom Thou hast made to put his trust in Thee. I know, O God, that I am vile and polluted in Thy sight ; but I must come into Thy presence or I die. Thou canst not behold any unclean thing, and yet, unless Thou lookest upon me who am nothing but uncleanness, I shall perish miserably and eternally. O look upon me with a gracious eye ; cleanse my soul with the blood of the Holy Lamb, that, being purified in that holy stream, my sins may lose their own foulness, and become as white as snow : then shall the leprous man be admitted to Thy sanctuary, and stand before the throne of grace, humble and full of sorrow for my fault, and full of hope of Thy mercy and pardon, through Jesus Christ.

O my God, Thou wert reconciled to mankind by thine own graciousness and glorious goodness, even when Thou didst find out so mysterious ways of redemption for us by sending Jesus Christ. Now, O gracious Father, let me also be reconciled to Thee ; for we continued enemies to Thee, though Thou lovedst us : let me no longer stand at a distance from Thee, but run unto Thee, bowing my will, and submitting my understanding, and mortifying my affections, and resigning all my powers and faculties to Thy holy laws, that Thou mayest take delight to pardon and sanctify, to assist Thy

servant with Thy grace, till by so unspeakable mercy I shall arrive to the state of glory.

I have spent much time in vanity ; grant me Thy grace, that I may recover my loss, and employ all the remaining portion of my time in holy offices and duties of repentance. My understanding hath been abused by false persuasions and vain confidences ; but now, O God, I offer up that imperious faculty wholly to the obedience of Christ ; to be governed by His laws, to be instructed by His doctrine, to be bended by all His arguments. My will hath been used to crookedness and peevish morosity ; but now, O God, I have no will but what is Thine, and I will rather die than consent and choose anything that I know displeases Thee. My heart was a fountain of evil thoughts, ungracious words, and irregular actions, because my passions were not obedient, nor carried to a right object ; but now, O God, I present them unto Thee, not as a fit oblation ; but as the lepers and the blind, the lame and the crooked, were brought unto the holy Jesus to be made straight and clean ; and when Thou hast taken what is Thine, and what the devil did usurp, then Thou wilt sanctify and save it, use it as Thine own, and make it to be so for ever.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

For Submission

O most gracious and eternal God, Father and Lord of all, I confess I am unworthy of any favour ;

I am less than the least of Thy mercies ; yet our weakness and unworthiness cannot be measures of Thy mercy ; Thou art good and gracious, and delightest in showing mercy to them that call upon Thee, and that put their trust in Thee. I know, O God, that Thou lovest to hear our prayers, and Thou delightest in the humble and resigned desires of Thy servants. O God, I humbly submit my desires, my interests, my contents, and all that I am or have, to Thy holy will and pleasure ; humbly begging of Thee that I may cheerfully suffer, and obediently do Thy will, and choose what Thou choosest, and observe the ways of Thy providence, and revere Thy judgment, and wait for Thy mercy, and delight in thy dispensation, and expect that all things shall work together for good to them that fear Thee. Oh, let Thy holy Spirit for ever be present with me, and make me to fear Thee and to love Thee above all things in the world, for ever ; and then no ill can come unto Thy servant, for whosoever loves Thee cannot perish.

Hear the prayer of Thy servant, and relieve my sorrow, and sanctify my desires, and accept me in the Son of Thy love, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

For Grace

O Almighty God, Thou art the Judge of all the world, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the Father of mercies, the Father of men and angels ; Thou lovest not that a sinner should perish, but delightest in our salvation, and hast in our Lord Jesus Christ, established the covenant of repentance, and promised pardon to all them that confess their sins, and forsake them. O my God, be pleased to *work* in me what Thou hast commanded should *be* in me. Lord, I am a dry tree, who neither have brought forth fruit unto Thee and unto holiness, nor have wept out salutary tears, the instrument of life and restitution, but have behaved myself like an unconcerned person in the ruins and breaches of my soul ; but, O God, Thou art my God ; early will I seek Thee : my soul thirsteth for Thee in a barren and thirsty land, where no water is.

Oh, let the cry of Thy Son's blood, who offers an eternal sacrifice to Thee, speak on my behalf. My conscience does accuse me ; the devils rejoice in my fall, and aggravate my crimes, already too great ; and Thy Holy Spirit is grieved by me. But my Saviour Jesus Christ died for me, and Thou pitiest me : and Thy Holy Spirit still calls upon me, and I am willing to come ; but I cannot come unless Thou drawest me with cords of love. Oh, draw me unto Thee by the arguments of charity, by the endearments of Thy mercies, by the order of Thy Providence, by the hope of Thy promises, by the sense of Thy comforts, by the conviction of my understanding, by the zeal and passion of holy affections, by an unreprouable faith and an humble

hope, by a religious fear and an increasing love, by the obedience of precepts and efficacy of holy example, by Thy power and Thy wisdom, by the love of Thy Son, and the grace of Thy Spirit.

I am not worthy, O Lord, I am not worthy to come into Thy presence : and where shall I appear who have put my Lord to death, and crucified the Lord of Life? Where should I appear but before my Saviour, who died for them that have murdered Him ; who hath loved them that hated Him ; who is the Saviour of His enemies, and the life of the dead, and the redemption of captives, and the advocate for sinners ; and all we do need and all we can desire?

Lord, give me the grace of tears and pungent sorrow ; turn my sin into repentance, and let my repentance proceed to pardon and refreshment. Support me with Thy graces, strengthen me with Thy Spirit, soften my heart with the dew of heaven, with penitential showers. Make the remaining portion of my days full of caution and observance, strong and resolute, patient and severe.

Grant that in Thy wounds I may find safety ; in Thy stripes, my cure ; in Thy pain, my peace ; in Thy cross, my victory ; in Thy resurrection, my triumph ; and a crown of righteousness in the glories of Thy eternal kingdom.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

**An Act of Holy Resolution of Amendment of Life,
in case of Recovery**

O most just and most merciful Lord God, who has sent evil diseases, sorrow and fear, trouble, and uneasiness, into the world, and planted them in our houses, and round about our dwellings, to keep sin from our souls, or to drive it thence ; I humbly beg Thee that this my sickness may serve the ends of the Spirit, and be a messenger of spiritual life, an instrument of reducing me to more religious courses.

I know, Lord, I am unready and unprepared in my accounts, having thrown away great portions of my time in vanity, and set myself hugely back in the accounts of eternity ; and I had need live my life over again, and live it better ; but Thy counsels are in the great deep, and Thy footsteps in the water, and I know not what Thou wilt determine of me. If I die, I throw myself into the arms of the holy Jesus, whom I love above all things ; and if I perish, I know I have deserved it ; but Thou wilt not reject him that loves Thee : but if I recover, I will live by Thy grace, and help to do the work of God, and passionately pursue my interest in heaven, and serve Thee in the labour of love, with the charities of a holy zeal, and the diligence of a firm and humble obedience. Lord, I will dwell in Thy temple, and in Thy service ; religion shall be my employment, and alms shall be my recreation,

and patience shall be my rest ; to do Thy will shall be my meat and drink, and to live shall be Christ, and then to die shall be gain.

O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence, and be no more seen. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Conformity of Will and Joyful Hope

Give me grace, O merciful Father, to put the rudder of my life into thy hands, to steer the course of it as seemeth Thee good ; for, believing that Thou lovest me, and believing withal that Thou art wiser than I am, I needs must confess, that whatsoever Thou doest with me is better than my own choosing for myself would be : and by all the troubles and unhappiness of this life, enable me to gain this, that when they most abound upon me, I may feel myself a stranger, and behave as such ; and think, thereupon, with more delight and stronger desires on my own country, and the rich and sure inheritance that lies there, and the ease and rest I shall have when I come thither. O, happy indeed, good Lord, are the stones Thou choosest to be living stones in thy spiritual temple, though they be hewed, and hammered, and polished for it by trials and afflictions. How much happier to be the meanest expectant of the glory to come, than the sole possessor of all the world ! May my soul have a continual desire to go to that company which

is above ; to the spirits of just men made perfect, to the company of angels, but most of all to Thee, O God, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament ! In that excellent country, Thou hast told me, O Father, that there is light and love, and nothing else ; that thy saints will there be happy for ever ; that they shall die no more, shall sorrow no more, shall be sick no more, shall doubt no more. How cheerfully, then, may a Christian go through all the sorrows and adversities of this transitory life ! To Thee, O blessed Lord, I commend and commit myself, both for time and eternity, in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

O compassionate Father, I would render unto Thee most humble thanks for that wonderful gradation of mercies shown to me in Thy Son. In Him Thou dost offer me Thy Holy Spirit, and with it the whole golden mine of all spiritual comfort and good ; allowing me, when wearied by the follies and miseries of the world, to refresh my soul in Thee ; yea, enjoining it upon me to speak my mind to Thee freely, as the kindest and tenderest of all Fathers, with the sure confidence that, as Thou art withal the Lord of heaven and earth, so Thou wilt make all different lines always to centre in my highest good, how opposite soever in appearance now. I do humbly confess my great need of afflictions,—yea, of many afflictions ; keep me, there-

fore, I pray Thee, from ever promising myself an exemption, although my present state be ever so free from them; and for the number and weight of them, let me resign that altogether into Thy hands, who art my wise Father and Physician, who knowest my mould and maladies, and what kind of chastisement is needful for my cure. But, merciful Father, let me never so wrong myself as to entertain any care at all but such as I may put into Thy hands, and make Thine on my behalf. May I have grace to give up all outward things into thy hands, referring the disposal of them to Thee, and that heartily and fully! Even in the darkest night of sorrow, may I cast anchor in Thee, and repose on Thee when I see no light; remembering that this is not my hope, nor the place of my rest, but the place of my trial and conflict; and that my home is above. Good Lord and Father, of Thine infinite mercy Thou hast called me to eternal glory; save me, then, I pray Thee, from ever being so ungrateful as to repine against Thee, and so to drown a hundred great blessings in any little trouble that befalls me: give me more deep thoughts of the things of the world to come; lift my eyes to that state that I am most nearly related to; direct my steps to it, and lead me towards it, cheerful and unwearied, by an assured hope that the joyful day will at length come, when, as Christ's disciple, I shall be admitted into the fullest light.

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

Ejaculatory Prayer for one under any severe Suffering

Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and in misery: help me, meekly and gratefully, and with perfect resignation, to bear the chastening of the Lord; to feel that it comes from the hand of a Father, and is sent with designs of the tenderest mercy. I implore Thee to bring home to my heart the blessed assurance that Thou dost not afflict willingly nor grieve Thy children; that Thou dost it for our profit, to make us partakers of Thine holiness; and that Thou art sitting as a Refiner, watching the process, and wilt keep Thy gold no longer in the fire than as Thou seest needful for the clear reflecting of Thine image in it.

O subdue all my unwillingness to suffer, and turn it into a meek and grateful acquiescence, that so I may glorify Thee, and show forth the power of Thy grace. O my God, I lament before Thee, and am most truly grieved and sorry at heart, that I feel so little of this divine and thankful reception of Thy chastenings. I acknowledge and bewail this my great sinfulness, and do the more earnestly cry for grace and help; for I know Thy grace *is* sufficient for me, and that I can do and bear all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Leave me not to struggle alone through these dark waters, but let me feel Thy helping, supporting hand; let

me hear Thy sweet voice of tender mercy, saying, "It is I, be not afraid."

For who am I, that I should complain when Thou dost afflict me? Do I not richly deserve Thy chastenings? Have I not every reason to expect them, seeing that there is no son whom the Father chasteneth not, and that not mildly alone, but even "with scourges?" Thy scourges are upon me, O my God, and my flesh quaileth beneath Thy strokes; yet will I not say, "Remove Thy heavy hand from me;" but rather, I implore Thee, while Thou art scourging, be also supporting; while Thou art wounding, be also pouring in oil and wine: as my sufferings abound, let my consolations abound also; and let me feel that Thou art very pitiful and of tender mercy. Blessed Father, I know that Thy judgments are right, and that in very faithfulness Thou art afflicting me. I beseech Thee let Thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Thy word unto Thy servant.

Be not far from me while trouble is so near; without Thee, my frailty cannot but fall. Unless Thou sustain me, I shall faint under my burden. Leave me not, therefore, neither forsake me, Thou God of my salvation. Give me a holy readiness to suffer as much and as long as Thou pleasest. Let me say with Jesus, "Not my will, but Thine be done." O Jesus, my Lord and my God, my gracious, compassionate, loving Saviour—my High Priest, who art touched with the feelings of my infirmities, because Thou wast Thyself made perfect

through suffering, teach me to reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed, and enable me even to rejoice in bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. May I joyfully suffer here with Thee, that I may gloriously reign with Thee hereafter. Let me count of this affliction that it is light, and but for a moment; and let it work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

O meek and suffering Lamb of God, may I suffer meekly like Thee. May I give my back to Him that smiteth me, even my righteous Father; and since it "pleased Him to bruise Thee," who "knewest no sin," O let me, who am so full of sin, humbly bend beneath Thy chastening rod, and meekly bear the bruises caused by its strokes.

Thou hast promised, blessed Saviour, that Thy people shall indeed "drink of Thy cup," and "be baptized with Thy baptism;" and shall I turn away my lips from that sacred cup, and not rather count it all joy to share it with Thee? Thy holy Apostle Paul desired to know the fellowship of thy sufferings, and shall not I desire also? Shall I only desire communion in Thy glory and Thy joy, and not rather account myself blessed to have fellowship with Thy griefs?

I beseech Thee, for Thy Name's sake, and "to the praise of the glory of Thy grace," bring every murmuring thought into a glad captivity to Thy holy cross. Strengthen me with "all might, ac-

according to Thy glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Oh, that I may be a spectacle to angels and to men, of Thy mighty power to uphold, yea, of Thy glorious power to make me, out of these depths, raise unto Thee not the voice of prayer alone, but also the song of praise ! May I glorify Thee by exhibiting all the graces of Thy Holy Spirit, the love which endureth all things, and gladly welcomes every instrument of communion with her Lord ; humility, which deems all far less than her iniquities deserve ; faith, which realizes the blessed end and effect of suffering ; and hope, which rejoices in the prospect of the glory that shall follow.

Let the Holy Ghost the Comforter comfort me in this sad hour, with the sure and certain expectation of eternal joy and endless felicity. Quicken my faith, that I may realize those joys which are at Thy right hand. Oh, that my pains may be as blessed angels bearing me upon their wings to heaven, and making that "pleasant land" appear more exceeding pleasant in contrast with this great and terrible wilderness. Blessed be Thou, my God, who givest me such expectations, so full of rapture and transport. Blessed be Thou, my Saviour, who of Thy tender mercy didst suffer and die to purchase for us such a glorious inheritance. Blessed be the Eternal Spirit, who brings these precious realities before our sad eyes, filling us with joy and peace in believing, and making us mourners, to abound in hope. Accept, most mer-

ciful God, these prayers and praises ; and pardon, comfort, sanctify, and, if it may be, relieve Thy poor child, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Short Prayer for Submission with Job

O God, let my earnest prayer now ascend with acceptance before Thee through Jesus. Father, withhold not thy tender mercies from me, but let Thy grace replenish my soul. Give me a very enlarged patience, even grace to rejoice in tribulation, however severe or long continued. Give me a more humbled heart, a sense of my need of suffering, a deeper sense of the value of suffering, a deeper sense of my own unworthiness, and of Thy great goodness in refining and purifying me for Thyself. Ah ! Lord, let me not shrink from Thy holy discipline, or faint under Thy kind rebukes. Let me never be weary of Thy corrections, or turn away with an unwilling and unthankful heart from the medicinal cup of affliction. Engrave with thine own Spirit on my heart those gracious words, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." May every day and hour of trial cut the holy lines yet deeper into the substance of my spirit. Teach me to estimate more highly the value of trial as a means of glorifying Thee, and as affording golden opportunities of showing my love to Thee, and exercising the graces which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and honour of God. Let me, like

a good soldier of the cross, rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer for and with my Lord, and with a firm and grateful heart let me take and keep my appointed station, though in the hottest of the battle. O God, weak and feeble, and utterly helpless as I am in myself, I yet trust in Thee to make me strong in Thyself, and in the power of Thy might; for Thou givest power to the faint, and to them that have no might Thou increasest strength. Amen, so let it be to me, for Jesus Christ's sake! to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be all praise, and honour, and glory, henceforth even for ever.

A General Prayer with Confession

O my God, hear me, I beseech Thee, at this time, in the name of Jesus Christ. Give me Thy holy Spirit to help me to pray, and enable me to draw near to Thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, with confidence and filial love, with a deep sense of need, and a hearty desire to obtain the blessings for which I ask.

Give me grace, I beseech Thee, to confess my sins before Thee, and lead me to a true and perfect knowledge of myself. Alas! my God, I confess how little I feel the burden of sin, the plague of my own heart. How poor and insufficient is my repentance! how insensible am I to the real nature of sin! how little do I mourn for it! how imperfectly do I hate it! how little do I feel towards it as Thou

wouldst have me feel ! Lord, I am truly ashamed of the hardness of my heart, and sincerely bewail and deplore it before Thee.

I confess also the coldness of my love to Thee. Oh, how little am I penetrated with the sense of Thy love to me ! How little do I love Thee in return ! Alas ! my heart is dull and hard. I can hear, and read, and think of Thy sufferings and Thy love ; and yet neither hate deeply the sins which made Thee suffer, nor love Thee deeply for the love which made Thee willing to suffer. I am ready to cling to, and to love my earthly treasures ; but to Thee, O God, my Saviour, how little do I cleave ! how cold, even when it is warmest, is my love to Thee !

And my love to my neighbour, how small is that also ! This also I confess with shame and sorrow. How little of a brother's heart have I for those around me ! How slow am I to seek their welfare ! how inconsiderate often of their happiness ! How few are the prayers which I put up for them ! How little am I moved by their sins and miseries ! How selfishly I seek my own comfort and happiness ! how little the comfort of my brethren ! How soon am I weary of doing good ! how easily turned aside from acts of charity ! how impatient of the faults of others ! how unwilling to sacrifice myself even for those who are dear to me ! And, alas ! alas ! my God, I often even dislike and despise those for whom Christ died, and am displeased if they come in my way. This didst not Thou, O

Lord Jesus ; but with shame I confess how little I am conformed to Thee, my Lord and Master.

Who can tell how oft he offendeth? And when I begin to confess, where shall I end? How often am I discontented and impatient, unwilling to suffer, and unhappy and fretful under Thy chastenings ; anxious to get rid of my burden, rather than anxious to profit by it ; weary of Thy corrections, or inattentive to their meaning ; indisposed to obedience, fond of my own way, or following Thine reluctantly ; unwilling to bear with others, though expecting to be borne with myself ; impatient of contradiction, proud, earthly-minded, often indisposed to prayer, and oftener still to praise ; careless in private prayer, careless in Thy house, careless in reading Thy word, careless about truth, careless about time, irreverent, unthankful ! O Lord, what shall I say ? I will cover my face with shame ; I will smite upon my breast and cry, " God be merciful to me a sinner ; for Thy Name's sake, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Yes, it is great, yet pardon it ; and *because* it is great, for Thy Name's sake pardon it. Oh, magnify in the full and free pardon of my great iniquity the riches of Thy grace, the greatness of Thy mercy, the depth of Thy love, the height of Thy compassion, the length of Thy long-suffering, the breadth of Thy loving-kindness. It is Thine own word, that if we confess our sins, Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord, I am persuaded of it ; I most earnestly embrace it ; I bless Thee for its

exceeding great and precious promise ; the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Oh, let the hand of my faith sprinkle that most holy, most precious blood upon my conscience, for the healing of my soul.

But, Lord, I beseech Thee, let the sense of pardon deepen my penitence, and exceedingly increase the contrition of my spirit. Oh, work in me that contrition which is well-pleasing in Thy sight. Let sin be my heaviest burden, my deepest affliction; the only thing I cannot bear ; teach me to see it as the burden my Saviour bore upon the cross, as the hateful thing which caused His death. Blessed Spirit of holiness, convince me of sin, and make it indeed hateful to me.

Increase, I beseech Thee, my love to Thee exceedingly more and more. Fill my soul with all the love of which my nature is capable. Let me love Thee as much as it is possible for me to love Thee : let the sound of my Redeemer's name never fail to thrill my spirit. Let the hope of seeing Him, and being like Him, lie like a burning coal at my heart. Let His personal presence be unspeakably desirable and precious to me : let me seek after communion with Him as my highest happiness, my dearest enjoyment, the greatest blessedness of which I am capable. Oh, make me like the seraphim, burning with love.

And let my heart, enlarged with love to Thee, be filled with love to my neighbour. Let me ever be ready to spend and be spent for others. Fill

me with kindness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, tenderness, compassion, forbearance, forgiveness, brotherly kindness, charity; that charity which never faileth, which is not easily provoked, which beareth all things, which suffereth long, and is kind.

Give me, I beseech Thee, the spirit of grace and of supplication in behalf of others. May I pray with all perseverance for all saints especially. May I be deeply impressed with a sense of the value of souls, and be always watching for opportunities to serve the spirit and heart of my neighbour, thinking no trouble too great by which I may promote the welfare of all around me; acting always from a glowing love as well as from a sense of duty. Let duty be inseparably joined with inclination, even as in the soul of the blessed Jesus, whose meat and drink it was to do Thy will.

And oh, my God, give me, I beseech Thee, a spirit of affectionate and grateful submission to Thy holy will; a deep desire to profit by Thy chastenings; a ready willingness to suffer as much and as long as Thou seest needful for me. Never let me faint under Thy rebukes, or think for a moment that Thou art careless of my sorrows, or indifferent to my sufferings. Open my inward ear to hear the voice of my Father speaking to me through trial; and give me grace with heartfelt thankfulness and humble joy, to share the cup of Christ, and to be baptized with His baptism.

And I beseech Thee also to increase mightily

my love for Thy holy word. May it be my meditation all the day, and in the night watches, whenever Thou holdest mine eyes waking. May it be every day, the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Let the word of Christ dwell in me richly in all wisdom, and the spirit of Christ continually open to my mind and heart its deep and precious treasures. And, I pray Thee, make me to delight exceedingly and increasingly in all occasions of communion with Thee. How often, through carelessness, through indolence and infirmity of body, through want of earnestness and full purpose of heart, do holy seasons pass away but little improved, and leave but little trace of good behind ! Oh, that it may be so no more ! O Lord, so quicken my soul, that I may more anxiously improve all the means of grace, and more thankfully trade with the talents entrusted to my care ; whether permitted to enter thy sanctuary or detained at home, let my soul maintain as unbroken communion with Thee as it is possible for a soul to enjoy upon this side of heaven.

O Lord, hear ; O Lord, forgive ; O Lord, hearken, and defer not ; for Thine own sake, O my God, and for the sake of my blessed Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Short Prayers for the Sick and Afflicted

O Lord, hear me in the day of trouble !
Send me help from the sanctuary,
And strengthen me out of Zion.

Look upon my affliction and my pain,
And forgive all my sin.
Rejoice the soul of Thy servant,
For unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

I am afflicted very much ;
Quicken me, O Lord, according to Thy word.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me ;
Therefore will I remember Thee.

Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle :
Are they not in Thy book ?

I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right,
And that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.
Let, I pray Thee, Thy merciful kindness be for my
comfort,
According to Thy word unto Thy servant.
Let Thy tender mercies come unto me,
That I may live.

Into Thy hands I commit my spirit ;
Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord,
Thou art my Lord.

I am Thine, save me :
Preserve my soul, for I am holy..

What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him,
And that Thou shouldst set Thine heart upon him !

And that Thou shouldst visit him every morning,
And try him every moment !

O that by this my iniquity may be purged,
And that this may be all the fruit,
To take away my sin !

O, let patience have her perfect work,
That I may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Strengthen me with all might,
According to Thy glorious power,
Unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.

O Righteous Father, and ever to be praised, the hour is now come that Thy servant is to be tried.

Behold, Father, it is fit that in this hour Thy servant suffer something for Thee. Most adorable Father, now for a short time I am to be oppressed, afflicted, humbled, and disquieted, with many passions and infirmities.

So it has been appointed by Thee ; and nothing happens of all I suffer, but that which is according to Thy blessed will. This is a mercy Thou showest Thy friends, that they be afflicted and suffer something in this world for Thee ; in what manner and by whomsoever Thou pleasest.

Without Thy counsel and providence, nothing happens upon earth. It is good for me, Lord, that Thou hast humbled me, that so I may learn to

obey Thee, and cast from me all pride and presumption of heart. Behold, beloved Father, I am in Thy hands; behold, I bow myself under the rod of Thy correction.

Strike me now, and make my proud neck and stubborn will bend under the appointments of Thy will.

Make me devout and humble, that I may be ready to follow every beck of Thy Divine pleasure.

I recommend myself, and all that belongs to me, into Thy hands, to receive the correction Thou shalt think fit; for it is better for me to be chastised here than hereafter. Thou knowest what is expedient for my good, and what tribulation is necessary to purge me from the filth of sin.

Do with me according to Thy pleasure, and despise not the sighs of a sinful soul.

Thou art my God and my deliverer: help me in the day of tribulation.

ANON.

LXVI

Meditation on the Peace and Health of Heaven

✓ WHEN these dark hours of earthly love,
And earthly pangs are o'er;
These lips shall bless, these hands shall move,
These eyes shall look no more:

Oh! let no tear thine eyelids dim
O'er this pale form of clay,
But think I rest at peace with Him
Who wipes all tears away!

These lips transformed shall sound the words,
Hosanna to the Lamb!

These hands transfigured sweep the chords
That praise the great I AM—

These hollow eyes but seem to sleep,
For oh! to them is given
An endless watch of bliss to keep,
For they have waked in heaven!

ANON.

On the Parts and Mysteries of the Passion

All praise, honour, and glory be to the holy and eternal Jesus. I adore Thee, O blessed Redeemer, eternal God, the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel; for Thou hast done and suffered for me more than I could wish, more than I could think of, even all that a lost and miserable perishing sinner could possibly need.

Thou wert afflicted with thirst and hunger, with heat and cold, with labours and sorrows, with hard journeys and restless nights: and when Thou wert contriving all the mysterious and admirable ways of paying our scores, Thou didst suffer Thyself to be designed to slaughter by those for whom in love Thou wert ready to die.

What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou thus visitest him?

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus; for Thou wentest about doing good, working miracles of

mercy, healing the sick, comforting the distressed, instructing the ignorant, raising the dead, and enlightening the blind, strengthening the lame, straightening the crooked, relieving the poor, preaching the gospel, and reconciling sinners by the mightiness of Thy power, by the wisdom of Thy spirit, by the word of God, and the merits of Thy passion, Thy healthful and bitter passion.

Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, who wert content to be conspired against by the Jews, to be sold by Thy servant for a vile price, and to wash the feet of him that took money for Thy life, and to give to him and all Thy Apostles the most holy body and blood, to become a sacrifice for their sins even for their betraying and denying Thee, and for all my sins, even for my crucifying Thee afresh, and for such sins which I am ashamed to think of, but that the greatness of my sins magnify the infiniteness of Thy mercies, who didst so great things for so vile a being.

Lord, what is man, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, who being to depart the world, didst comfort Thy Apostles, pouring out into their ears and hearts treasures of admirable discourses ; who didst recommend them to Thy Father with a mighty charity, and then didst enter into the garden, set with nothing but briers

and sorrows, where Thou didst suffer a most unspeakable agony, until the sweat strained through Thy pure skin like drops of blood, and there didst sigh and groan, and fall flat upon the earth, and pray and submit to one intolerable burthen of Thy Father's wrath, which I had deserved and Thou sufferedst.

Lord, what is man, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, who hast sanctified to us all our natural infirmities and passions by vouchsafing to be in fear and trembling and sore amazement, by being bound and imprisoned, by being harassed, and dragged with cords of violence and rude hands, by being drenched in the brook in the way, by being sought after like a thief and used like a sinner, who wert the most holy and the most innocent, cleaner than an angel, and brighter than the morning-star.

Lord, what is man, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be Thy loving-kindness and pity by which Thou didst neglect Thy own sorrows, and go to comfort the sadness of Thy disciples, quickening their dullness, encouraging their duty, arming their weakness with excellent precepts against the day of trial. Blessed be that humility and sorrow of Thine, who being Lord of the angels, yet wouldest need and receive comfort from Thy servant the angel; who didst offer Thyself to Thy persecutors, and madest them able to seize Thee; and didst receive the

traitor's kiss, and sufferedst a veil to be thrown over Thy holy face, that Thy enemies might not presently be confounded by so bright a lustre ; and wouldest do a miracle to cure a wound of one of Thy spiteful enemies ; and didst reprove a zealous servant in behalf of a malicious adversary ; and then didst go like a lamb to the slaughter, without noise or violence or resistance, when Thou couldest have commanded millions of angels for Thy guard and rescue.

Lord, what is man, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be that holy sorrow Thou didst suffer when Thy disciples fled, and Thou wert left alone in the hands of cruel men, who like evening wolves thirsted for a draught of Thy best blood ; and Thou wert led to the house of Annas, and there asked ensnaring questions, and smitten on the face by him whose ear Thou hadst but lately healed ; and from thence wert dragged to the house of Caiaphas, and there all night didst endure spittings, affronts, scorn, contumelies, blows, and intolerable insolences ; and all this for man, who was Thy enemy, and the cause of all Thy sorrow.

Lord, what is man, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be Thy mercy, who when Thy servant Peter denied Thee, and forsook Thee, and forswore Thee, didst look back upon him, and by that gracious and chiding look didst call him back to himself and Thee :

who wert accused before the high priest, and railed upon, and examined to evil purposes, and with designs of blood ; who wert declared guilty of death, for speaking a most necessary and most profitable truth ; who wert sent to Pilate and found innocent, and sent to Herod and still found innocent, and were arrayed in white, both to declare Thy innocence, and yet to deride Thy person, and wert sent back to Pilate and examined again, and yet nothing but innocence found in Thee, and malice round about Thee to devour Thy life, which yet Thou wert more desirous to lay down for them than they were to take it from Thee.

Lord, what is man, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be that patience and charity by which for our sakes Thou wert content to be smitten with canes, and have that holy face, which angels with joy and wonder do behold, be spit upon, and be despised, when compared with Barabbas, and scourged most rudely with unhallowed hands, till the pavement was purpled with that holy blood, and condemned to a sad and shameful, a public and painful death, and arrayed in scarlet, and crowned with thorns, and stripped naked, and then clothed and loaden with the cross, and tormented with a tablet stuck with nails at the fringes of Thy garment, and bound hard with cords, and dragged most vilely and most piteously till the load was too great, and did sink Thy tender and virginial body to the earth : and yet

didst comfort the weeping women, and didst more pity Thy persecutors than Thyself, and wert grieved for the miseries of Jerusalem to come forty years after, more than for Thy present passion.

Lord, what is man, &c.

Blessed be Thy name, O holy Jesus, and blessed be that incomparable sweetness and holy sorrow which Thou sufferedst, when Thy holy hands and feet were nailed upon the cross, and the cross being set in a hollowness of the earth, did in the fall rend the wounds wider, and there naked and bleeding, sick and faint, wounded and despised, didst hang upon the weight of Thy wounds three long hours, praying for Thy persecutors, satisfying Thy Father's wrath, reconciling the penitent thief, providing for Thy holy and afflicted mother, tasting vinegar and gall; and when the fulness of Thy suffering was accomplished, didst give Thy soul into the hands of God, and didst descend to the regions of longing souls, who waited for the revelation of this Thy day in their prisons of hope; and then Thy body was transfixed with a spear, and issued forth two sacraments, water and blood; and Thy body was composed to burial, and dwelt in darkness three days and three nights.

Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?

Thus, O blessed Jesus, Thou didst finish Thy holy passion with pain and anguish so great that

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nothing could be greater than it, except Thyself and Thy own infinite mercy ; and all this for man, even for me, than whom nothing could be more miserable, Thyself only excepted, who becamest so by undertaking our guilt and our punishment. And now, Lord, who hast done so much for me, be pleased only to make it effectual to me, that it may not be useless and lost as to my particular, lest I become eternally miserable, and lost to all hopes and possibilities of comfort. All this deserves more love than I have to give : but, Lord, do Thou turn me all into love, and all my love into obedience, and let my obedience be without interruption ; and then I hope Thou wilt accept such a return as I can make. Make me be something that Thou delightest in, and Thou shalt have all that I am or have from Thee, even whatsoever Thou makest fit for Thyself. Teach me to live wholly for my Saviour Jesu, and be ready to die for Jesus, and to be conformable to His life and sufferings, and to be united to Him by inseparable unions, and to own no passions but what may be servants to Jesus, and disciples of His institution. O sweetest Saviour, clothe my soul with Thy holy robe ; hide my sins in Thy wounds, and bury them in Thy grave ; and let me rise in the life of grace, and abide and grow in it, till I arrive at the kingdom of glory. *Amen.*

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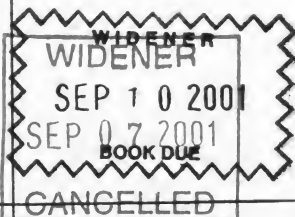
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